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# MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke*

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## CONFERENCE SERMON

By the Rev. T. Fish, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Mesopotamian Studies, Manchester University

It is by invitation of my friend and colleague, your Chairman, that I, who am not a member of your Union, address you this evening. The theme of your Conference is entitled 'Life and Death'. The title is, in itself, neutral. It might serve a conference of biologists or of physicians. However, yours is a conference of Christians met here to consider the theme of Life and Death from the standpoint of religions, both Christian and non-Christian. Five of the lectures will be concerned with Immortality. It is of this, or rather of Immortality within the context of Man's Final End, that I propose to speak to you now as I myself, as a Christian, have received it and cherish it.

A Sunday newspaper of yesterday's date introduced a series of articles with these words, 'Life after death for many believers is the most vital element of religion'. To how many believers this statement applies, no one can know. Maybe, to few. Perhaps even to few preachers. For there is some evidence to show that the future life is rarely the matter of sermons. It has been stated as a fact that over a period of five years, in the nineteen forties, not one sermon was preached on the future life on sound radio. Certainly it is not a common topic of conversation, though Miss Rose Macaulay may have exaggerated when she wrote that 'the immortality of the soul is one of those things over which we draw a veil—almost an unmentionable, like poverty to the complacent rich'. Such outward signs may deceive. They do, however, suggest that to many who believe in a future life, theirs is not a vital belief: it is a belief affirmed but not realized, or realized, in some degree, but not given high priority. To some it may be a belief which is not particularly congenial, especially when it is described as 'going to an eternal Hallelujah singing'. Or again to some, it may be a belief that all men go to 'heaven'; that 'hell' is, but no one will go 'there'. It seems, therefore, from the evidence, that by

many in all denominations the Christian affirmation of the future life, however interpreted, is treated like the luggage in the ship's hold, and labelled 'Not wanted on the journey'.

What is the Christian affirmation as expressed in what I may call the classical tradition? We may illustrate from the Shorter Catechism, which opens thus: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever'. The same is expressed more fully in the Roman Catholic Catechism, which has been described as 'the Church's appeal to the philosophic intelligence of her children of seven years of age'. That Catechism begins with the following questions and answers:

'Who made you? God made me.

Why did God make me? God made me to know him, love him and serve him in this world and to be happy with him for ever in the next.

To whose image and likeness did God make you? God made me to his own image and likeness.

Is this likeness to God chiefly in your body or your soul? This likeness to God is chiefly in my soul.

How is your soul like to God? My soul is like to God because it is a spirit and is immortal.'

Many of you will recall that this teaching is the foundation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola who wrote, 'Man was created for this end: to praise, reverence and serve the Lord his God, and by this means to attain eternal salvation. In this are comprised three great truths which are the foundation of all the Exercises: I come from God—I belong to God—I go to God. All other things or objects placed around man on earth have been created for him to serve as means to assist him in the pursuits of the end for which he was created.' Consonant with this is the sentence in the Roman Catechism: 'the four last things to be ever remembered are death, judgment, hell and heaven'.

'My soul is a spirit and is immortal', i.e. 'my soul shall never die'. By immortality is here meant, in the strict sense, personal immortality: the endless, non-successive conscious existence of the individual person. It means that personal identity is preserved. It means that by conscious memory the survivor of death is linked with his life before death. This life is predicated of the 'soul', which is defined as the ultimate principle within man by which he feels, thinks and wills, and by which his body-life is sustained.

The present is not the place or occasion to set out the arguments which are adduced, not as proofs, but as pointers to personal immortality. Indeed, because the accepted teaching concerning both the fact and the quality of the future life composes with the rest of accepted Christian teaching concerning God's ways with men, such arguments are, for many Christians, of only academic interest. The facts of faith are that God loves man; God seeks man; God, in his Son, died for man. Throughout

life God meets man at crisis points such as birth (Baptism), adolescence (Confirmation), failure (Penance), marriage (Matrimony), ordination (Holy Orders), the hour of death (Extreme Unction), and at soul's need, from early years (Holy Communion). Where all this is believed, what need of proofs of reason that God will hold one, however creaturely, for ever in closest communion? It is congruent with the facts of faith, that that which is begun on earth has, in God's loving Providence, completion in 'heaven'.

Clearly, this belief is, to faith, not the term of a syllogism. But it can be a point of departure, and is so used in exposition of the Christian Faith and Order to others or in understanding of it by oneself. On the other hand, there have been occasions when, in the exercise of spiritual authority, the destiny of man so conceived, has been used as a means to terrorize men and women into submission to demands which are morally highly questionable.

If the Christian is asked what awaits him at the end of the earthly road, the Creeds say simply: 'the life of the world to come', 'life everlasting'. The good and the wicked shall live for ever. The good shall live for ever in the glory and happiness of heaven, which is to see, love and enjoy God for ever: a state which 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive'. But the wicked also shall live for ever, eternally separated from the God who is the end of man's knowing and loving. A child taught such things is prepared for Dante's *Divina Commedia*. They contain nothing of what has been described as 'the heaven of the landscape gardener, the upholsterer and the lapidary whether presented in Milton's elaborate unreality, or in the more naïve splendours of Bunyan'. Here is doctrine that in the future life the blessed shall live the life, think the thoughts, love the love of God. This is the Christian view of the goal of man's life in time to which he must pass through the gate called death. Peace is the goal: peace described by St. Augustine as 'the tranquillity which proceeds from order especially in the will' which can find rest eternal only in The Eternal who is our peace. This is not a gospel which offends intelligence.

How congenial this is to the average churchgoer is doubtful. How to communicate it in sermons is not easy. But it can be done to good effect. In the nineteen thirties, Dr. Inge gave a series of radio talks on the future life. They brought him nearly two thousand letters from listeners. And there is good reason to believe that the man in the pew would gain by the reminder that Creation, Incarnation, Sacraments and the Word, and Politics are for this end: man's return to his God who is his home. In man's end is his beginning: his beginning and end are God, the giver and the gift, for ever. Speculation on 'what happens after death' is natural to man, but it is largely an attempt to see in the dark by us who have not eyes for the task. By faith we know that after death we shall live 'with God'.

For the rest we may recall the saying: 'What is that to thee? Follow thou Me'. Perhaps the main difficulty is not right thinking on the goal but right following of the way that leads to it.

By way of conclusion, I quote two authors who have expressed thoughts which are relevant. The first is Dom John Chapman, Abbot of Downside, who died in 1933, and to whose conferences and Spiritual Letters I owe much. The volume of Letters contains what he describes as a 'huge series of papers of theology—a theodicy—a theory of the world on the Christian hypothesis'. Those papers in the form of letters had much to say on Man's Destiny. They are highly schematic and thoroughly orthodox. And yet! Listen to his words. '*Now*, oddly enough, I can't say that *any* of that is my real spiritual life. I did not know this until lately. It is my Faith—it leads me to God—it is most useful out of prayer. But in prayer always—and out of prayer also—the mainspring of everything is wholly irrational, meaningless, inexpressible. "I want God"—and the word "God" has absolutely no meaning. I find so many in this positively absurd and obviously mystical condition. I suppose one contemplates without knowing it. . . . Of course, it simplifies people's spiritual life into nothing but the desire of God's will. The whole object of life becomes to want nothing that is not God. *Only there is no reason for it.* The word "God" means nothing—which is, of course, theologically correct, since God is nothing that we can think or conceive.'

The second author is Jeremy Taylor. His words are, 'I shall not be ashamed to say, that I am weary and toiled with rowing up and down in the seas of questions, which in the interests of Christendom have commenced, and in many propositions, of which I am heartily persuaded I am not certain that I am not deceived; and I find that men are most confident of those articles, which they can so little prove, that they never made questions of them; but I am most certain, that by living in the religion and fear of God, in obedience to the King, in the charities and duties of communion with my spiritual guides, in justice and love with all the world in their several proportions, I shall not fail of that end, which is perfective of human nature, and which will never be obtained by disputing.'

'I come from God, I belong to God, I go to God,' says St. Ignatius. Is this an instance of use of words which, according to Dom Chapman, have absolutely no meaning? 'That end which is perfective of human nature,' says Jeremy Taylor, who was sure of both the end and the way to attain it. But do we really *know*? Or shall we say with George Tyrrell: 'I feel more and more that as regards God and immortality, man was made not to know but to hope. Hope, rather than faith; for faith is so hopelessly confounded with knowledge.' It is, according to the Epistle of Barnabas, 'the hope of life which is the beginning and end of our faith'. According to the author of that Epistle, this was the first of the

'three *dogmata* of the Lord'. To-day, at each committal of the dead, the Prayer Book enjoins that we speak of 'the sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life'. In this hope the Christian is to live and to die.

## IMMORTALITY AND ETHICS

By Rev. A. J. Drewett, M.A., M.Sc.

In a conference on the subject of Life and Death, the relation between Immortality and Ethics obviously has a place. Ethics has been defined as the science of the good life, the systematic study of moral behaviour. It is obvious that what we consider to be the good is closely connected with purpose and aims. An action cannot be good if it does not lead to the fulfilment of some purpose which is thought to be desirable. If, therefore, we believe that this life is all, our morality will be designed to fulfil purposes which are confined to this world and this life. If, on the other hand, we believe that this life is not in itself complete but leads on to a future life beyond the grave, the whole of our moral activity will be affected by this belief.

It is, in fact, the close connection in Christianity between ethics and immortality which brings against us the shafts of criticism of the humanist and marxist moral philosophers. They accuse Christians of doing the good for ulterior motives and not for its own sake. We are concerned, they say, with eternal rewards and punishments. We do the right thing because it will bring us a crown of glory; we avoid the bad action because we are afraid of hell-fire. We are accused of ignoring or belittling the claims of this world because we are so concerned about the rewards and punishments of the next.

It may well be that at certain times and in certain circumstances, there has been a great deal of truth in this charge. When conditions of life in this world have been almost unbearable, the hopes of men have too readily turned to another world 'where true joys may be found'. And these joys have not been only of the purely spiritual kind; they have included the joy of escaping from poverty and overwork, the freedom from disease and tyranny and an assurance that all the frustrations and lacks of this life wil be removed. It is only when life here on earth becomes tolerable that men's hopes and aims are concentrated on making it more tolerable still and their aim increasingly moves towards its prolongation and the postponement of that other life beyond death.

I propose, therefore, to deal with the relationship between Immortality and Ethics by attempting an answer to two questions. First, what is the

shape of ethics when we believe in immortality; second, what happens to ethics when belief in immortality is lost. The answer to the first is found in the traditional Christian scheme, the answer to the second is given by modern humanism and its offspring, Marxism.

However much Christians may have misled the world into thinking that their ethic is one of rewards and punishments, a prudential ethic or an ethic of reciprocity, the fact is that the exact opposite is true of the ethic of the New Testament. Jesus was always insisting that those who do the good for the gain which they expect from it have their reward. For his followers, there was to be no such obvious reward, but on the contrary, suffering. The good life was to be lived not in order to gain the kind of rewards which this world thought to be right and just, but because it was the response to the claim of God. Membership of the Kingdom required a certain quality of life which was 'eternal'; its fruition would not be seen in this world at all, but in the timeless world of eternity. Furthermore, this eternal life was not something which could be earned by moral effort; it was a gift of God. This point is made in several of the parables, such as that of the labourers in the vineyard. It is emphasized in the Fourth Gospel in the conversations with Nicodemus and the woman at the well. The assurance of eternal life, life with God beginning here and now and never ending, produced an ethical response which was unique. 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'

For St. Paul, the dependence of ethics upon immortality is fundamental. This was because, for him, the resurrection of Jesus was not a foregone conclusion which followed automatically and inevitably from his divinity; it was the result of his perfect obedience to the will of God. 'Being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient until death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him a name which is above every name.' To be in Christ is then to be a new creation, and this new creation has its fruits in a new kind of life. The Spirit of Christ himself dwells in the believer, bringing to pass in him the fruits of redemption or reproducing in his life the characteristics of the Master's own life. In them, too, is the resurrection repeated, they become victors over sin and death. We might sum up by saying that the new insight which St. Paul gained from his own experience of Christ was that the moral life was possible for the Christian because of the Spirit of Christ which dwelt within him. In this power he could gain the victory over sin. The alternative was to struggle to fulfil the law, which convicted him of sin but gave him no power to overcome it. The very possibility of the good life rested upon the fact of the resurrection; it was grounded in immortality.

If man is therefore an immortal soul with an eternal destiny, the following would seem to be the consequence for ethics:

(*a*) His deeds in this life must be seen against an eternal background. This means that every action goes to the making of a personality which has eternal life.

(*b*) A man's behaviour and attitude towards other people will be governed by his knowledge of *their* immortal nature and destiny. We cannot, for example, treat men as means to our own ends, or exploit them for our own selfish purposes if we believe that they, like ourselves, are immortal souls for whom Christ died.

(*c*) This leads us on to thoughts of judgment. If, in fact, we are responsible beings with free choices, we are responsible for the way in which we lead our lives. But who is to say whether we have succeeded or not? The answer is that since God alone knows all the facts, he must be the judge. The New Testament sees that the judge is to be Christ himself. 'We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.' This is because he has trodden the way of humanity and is himself perfect man. As, therefore, a thing is judged when it is compared with the perfect thing of its kind, so each man is judged when he finds himself in the presence of Christ.

(*d*) The result of the judgment is seen as entry into Heaven for those who have proved themselves worthy, and separation from God which is Hell for those who have never been reborn into the Kingdom or lived by its principles in this life. Between these two states a great gulf is fixed and movement from one to the other is impossible. It would thus appear, from a literal reading of the New Testament, that the eternal destiny of the human soul is decided in its path through this life, and the clearest pictures of the last judgment which we have in the Gospels would suggest that the deciding factor is our attitude to other people. If we love others and express that love in the form of self-giving service, we shall be loved of God. If our lives have been selfish so that no thought of others entered into our hearts, then are we lost. We did not know our neighbour in his need. God does not know us in the last day.

This was the traditional Christian scheme. It has not gone unchallenged from within the Church itself as men's ideas of God have developed. In particular, there are two doctrines which have tried to overcome the theological difficulty involved in the traditional view of hell or of everlasting punishment. The problem is, of course, to reconcile the belief in God as love with One who would punish man through eternity for the sins which they have committed in the comparatively short space of this life. It is not an exaggeration to say that the way in which this idea has been presented has led many good men to reject Christianity altogether. They could not accept the idea of a God who was less moral than many men known to them.

The first doctrine for our consideration is that of conditional immortality. This regards immortality as a gift from God, bestowed in and through Christ and not an inherent property or endowment of the human soul. It would also state that it is possible, by leading a certain kind of life, to quench the Holy Spirit and so to die the death of an animal (assuming that animals have no immortal souls). Thus, for those who are not born again, or who have rejected the gift of eternal life in Christ, there is no life after death at all. They are not punished for eternity in an active sense, they cease to exist. They are deprived for ever of the unspeakable joys of the blessed. This view is not incompatible with Scripture (except at one point), nor apparently with the teaching of the Church of England, for the Commission on Doctrine 'did not feel itself as a whole called upon to make a pronouncement upon it'.

There is one point, however, at which this doctrine can be challenged in the New Testament, and that is in I Timothy ii. Here the Apostle argues that because Christ died for all, it is God's desire that all men shall be saved and should come to the knowledge of the truth. This is the basis of the opening prayer in the 1928 Baptism Service: 'Beloved in Christ Jesus, seeing that all men are from their birth prone to sin, but that God willeth all men to be saved, for God is love.' If God wills all men to be saved, as he must because he is love, can any be finally lost? Here we have the basis of the doctrine of universal salvation. It believes that if, in the last resort, any single soul were finally lost, God's purpose would be frustrated. There is no place here to go into this doctrine in detail, but perhaps one may refer to Dr. J. A. T. Robinson's *In the End, God* as being a recent statement of the doctrine in which he comes down on the side of universal salvation.

The traditionalist will argue that both of these doctrines, and especially the second, lead to a sentimental watering down of the Christian religion and destroy the basis of Christian ethics. Remove the threat of hell, he argues, and men will do as they like. For him, the main motive for the good life would seem to be fear of eternal punishment. On the other hand, most Christians agree that the primitive idea of hell-fire could never be reconciled with the nature of God as seen in Jesus Christ. Far more damaging to this argument is the fact that on any objective showing, the level of morals in those countries where primitive ideas of eternal punishment have been given up, seems to be far higher than it did when those views were generally held. Modern research would certainly confirm the New Testament statement that love casts out fear and that a religion or morality based upon fear was far worse for humanity than none at all.

We turn now to a brief consideration of what happens to ethics when belief in immortality is jettisoned. On what foundation can ethics be

based when the traditional religious sanctions are no longer accepted? To this question many contemporary moral philosophers are now turning their attention. They believe that unless a satisfactory alternative can be found, the whole moral structure of society may break down.

It must be noted at once that, as yet, the humanists are not agreed. Broadly speaking, there are two camps. There are those who think that morality can be based on science, and those who believe that it needs to draw upon the wisdom of the ages. Examples of the scientific approach are C. H. Waddington, who finds a guide to morality in evolution. That which is in line with the 'direction of evolution as a whole' is good; that which is contrary is bad. Barbara Wootton thinks that a basis for ethics must be found in a concept of biological efficiency, of physical and mental health. Erich Fromm, in *Man for Himself*, seeks a basis along the path of psychological investigation. He distinguishes in human personality between what he calls 'non-productive' and 'productive' orientations, and argues that the moral task is the fostering of the latter.

On the other hand, humanists like Julian Huxley and Corless Lamont emphasize the importance of traditional wisdom and instructive insight. Thus Huxley accuses some humanists of what he calls 'scientific hypertrophy' and 'religious atrophy', a disposition to over-estimate the place and value of science, and a consequent tendency to depreciate the values of religious and aesthetic experience. He writes, 'Anyone who has experienced the illumination of new knowledge, the ecstacy of poetry or music, the intense satisfaction of a difficult task achieved, knows that the above experiences are in some way valuable for their own sakes beyond everyday satisfaction.'

We should perhaps add that the analytical philosophers have questioned the validity of ethical statements altogether. Thus A. J. Ayer, in *Language, Truth and Logic*, thinks that ethical statements are emphatic statements of one's approval or disapproval of some action which describe a state of mind but cannot be regarded as ethical truth, as this conception of ethical truth is for him without meaning.

Humanists are therefore agreed that there is no objective ethical code, but they are far from agreeing on what is to take the place of the traditional scheme. They seem to be moving to the point where they think that a concensus can be based on what might be called common-sense. They are probably right in thinking that the traditional scheme was too rigid and that in a changing world we need to act in such a way that particular problems are solved. A good example of the kind of thing I mean is the question of birth control. The traditional system condemned birth control on grounds of divine revelation. It is now seen that the alternative is poverty, starvation and war. The humanist thus charges that branch of the Church which refuses to adapt its ethical teaching to these new circumstances with bringing great evil upon mankind. In

short, what is good in one situation may be bad in another. Ethics cannot be absolute in the sense that the circumstances can be ignored. We must use our common-sense. It is obvious, however, that crude individualism in ethics will not work. We cannot have a situation in which everyone does what is right in his own eyes. Society must be the judge and there must be a recognized system of law. Morality arises, for the humanist, from the fact that human desires are not naturally harmonious, or what Russell called 'compossible'. Russell therefore finds that the 'greatest compossible satisfaction of needs and desires' provides a rational criterion for the principles and laws needed to regulate behaviour.

As is well known, Marxism finds the basis of ethics in the economic system in any given society. Morality is one of the components of the superstructure which the owners of the means of production erect in order to preserve that system in their own interests. Ethical systems vary, therefore, according to the economic system, and when one changes, the other changes too. The ethical drive in communism is derived from the aim to bring in the classless society. Any action which furthers this purpose is good, any that postpones or hinders it is bad.

There is no need to labour the obvious differences between an ethic which sees life in terms of this world only and one which accepts the doctrine of immortality and has its source in a God who is transcendent. If God and immortality are jettisoned, the moral life has to find its reason and purpose from within the framework of time and space. Morality is then a means, not to the fulfilment of the will of God and the perfection of man's life in the beatific vision, but a sensible arrangement for living together in the world with the minimum amount of friction and the maximum degree of comfort. The aim is the realization in history of a society in which each individual will have all the good things possible so far as this world is concerned.

Most of us would think that this is not a sufficient purpose to make sense of life and that it fails to explain the nature or destiny of man. Perhaps a fitting end to this paper is a quotation from F. R. Barry's *Relevance of Christianity*:

> 'No ethic of which the guiding motive is conformity to God's holy will can find its goal in this world of time. No utilitarian scheme of ethics (however nobly "idealistic") can ever do justice to what is implied in it. If our moral achievement always ends only in the attainment of the slightly better, that, in itself, is proof that we can never attain the good. If the Kingdom of God which we seek is the perfecting of a temporal condition, somewhere to be realized in time, then it will always be exposed to the relativities of the temporal process. It follows that the goal of moral endeavour is an infinite but never completed progress, and the good life is inherently self-frustrating. But it is the very nerve of religion, at least of a fully-moralized religion, that the good which the moral will seeks is an abiding rest for the people of God. This aim cannot be described adequately in terms of personal freedom or fulfilment. That imports a self-

regarding suggestion which is far removed from the Christian genius. The kingdom which is the goal of the Christian ethic is a good, final, absolute and eternal in the fruition of the glorious Godhead. It is a kingdom which cannot be shaken. Only this transcendent finality of the ultimate convictions of faith gives the Christian his spontaneity in welcoming the gladness of this life, his firmness in accepting its duties, his sureness of attack on its moral tasks. God for ever "makes all things new, yet Himself abides for ever the same", and the Christian seeks to renew this present world, ever changing and ever passing away, by "the powers of the world to come".'

# IMMORTALITY IN THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

By the Rev. Dr. E. G. Parrinder, Reader in the History of Religions, London University

Belief in life after death is one of the oldest of man's religious conceptions, and it is found in some form in all religions. To consider the significance of other than Christian views, seriously radical restriction of scope is imperative. I propose to leave aside all religions of the past, prehistoric, Egyptian, Roman, and the like. Even further, those two sister-religions to Christianity (or perhaps one should say mother and niece), Judaism and Islam, have had such similar beliefs to ourselves in heaven and hell, and they too may be left aside.

This leaves us with the great divide between East and West, fundamentally between Palestine and India. Professor R. C. Zaehner has said recently, in his challenging book *At Sundry Times*, 'When we look at the religions of the world, we are faced with two totally different approaches to the whole subject; we are faced with two chosen peoples, not one; for, whereas Europe and the Near East owe their religions directly or indirectly to the Jews, further Asia owes hers directly or indirectly to the Indians: and these two peoples see religion in an entirely different way.'[1]

The Hebrews and the Indians might well be called the 'religion-possessed' peoples; both passionately concerned with spiritual things, both producing profound speculations as well as extremes of religious scrupulosity in Pharisees and Brahmins, and both giving birth to more great religions, Christianity, Buddhism, and others. So, 'Israel and India are the "types" of all higher religion. Outside them we do find the mystical and prophetical types of religion represented, but nowhere else are they so clearly differentiated.'[2]

That the religions of India are so ancient and profound cannot fail to impress the sympathetic Westerner, but he should not be blind to the facts both of the diversity of these religions and beliefs within themselves and to their differences of emphasis from much of Semitic religion. Polytheism and pantheism, monotheism and atheism jostle each other in the Indian religious and philosophical complex. A different approach to religion from the Hebrew passion for God is seen in the primary concern of India with the soul. This does not mean that Hindus, or Buddhists for that matter, have no Object of worship. It does demand careful and critical examination of concepts and avoidance of all attempts at an easy syncretism of religious beliefs.

In the Vedic age, the beliefs of the Indo-Aryans were clearly polytheistic. Man called upon many gods to help him in life, and at death Agni, the sacred fire in cremation, led him to the presence of Yama, the

[1] p. 16.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

chief of the dead, to the fathers and to the gods. The ancient Vedic hymns have been treasured down the ages and form part of the basis both of popular ideas of heaven and, in the later hymns, for the pantheistic developments of the Upanishads.

The Upanishadic speculations are particularly relevant to our topic of immortality; for it has been said that whereas Israel was concerned with God, India explored the nature of the soul. In India a dualistic conception of body and soul differs from the Hebrew view of the unity of the human personality, a blurring of the distinctions between human and divine contrasts with Semitic transcendentalism, and a profound concern with immortality is apparent from very early times, in contrast with its late development in Israel.

In one of the earliest Upanishads we read the famous and ever-remembered cry:

> From the unreal lead me to the real,
> From darkness lead me to the light,
> From death lead me to immortality.[3]

This immortality which the Indian sages so desired was the immortality of the soul. The resurrection of the flesh, so strongly taught in later Judaism, Islam and Christianity down to our own times, would have been abhorrent. For the flesh is illusory, corruptible, and essentially transitory, passing away never to be reformed. Only the soul is abiding and eternal.

There are many developments of thought on the nature of the soul, but beneath them lies the belief that souls are eternal and infinite, that matter and the body keep the soul in bondage, and that the goal of man must be liberation, which is achieved by breaking the fetters of matter. Liberation comes through knowledge, by spiritual and moral discipline (*yoga*), and sometimes through divine grace.

Not content with the idea of an immortal soul (atman), the Indian thinkers went on to explore the relationship of the individual soul with the divine. They saw the divine as dwelling in man:

> 'That God, the maker of all things, the Great Soul (mahatman), Ever seated in the heart of creatures, Is framed by the heart, by the thought, by the mind—They who know That, become immortal.'[4]

So the further step was taken to identify the soul, the self which is 'the honey of all beings', the 'bright, immortal person', with the divine. 'He indeed is the same as that Soul, that Immortal, that Brahman, that All.'[5] This monistic teaching has characterized Hindu thought down the ages, though not without important modifications. And one finds modern Hindus expressing the belief in similar terms: 'The self is really an inte-

[3]Brihad-aranyaka, 1, 3.
[4]Svetasvatara Upanishad, 4. 17.
[5]Brihad-aranyaka, 2, 5.

gral part of the Supreme Being and is essentially divine, but in its ignorance it considers itself and the world (which is also a part of the Supreme Being) to be separate from and independent of him. In consequence, it gets entangled in the meshes of its selfish activities (*karma*). This means bondage for the self and leads to its repeated birth and death in this world with their inevitable sorrows and suffering.'[6]

This monism seems, to the monotheist, to destroy the relationship of man with God, and indeed to be tautologous if all things are one and identical. One can understand that Muslims and Christians have been shocked by it; but it must be said that Indians have been too. The modified monism of Ramanuja and the later *bhakti* movements, and the great mass of popular Indian religion, has been in revolt against the extremes of monism. To this we shall refer again later.

It is through the stress laid on the soul that there have appeared in India those so-called 'atheistic' systems, a contradiction in terms if they are religions, as Jainism and Buddhism claim to be, rather than philosophies like the Samkhya teaching. All these schools are concerned primarily with salvation, or deliverance of the soul from the bonds of matter and attainment of its true immortality. The Jains reject belief in God altogether, but they believe that there are innumerable souls, of whom the disembodied conquerors live at the summit of the universe in steady and eternal bliss.

But Buddhism, as is well known, not only denies or ignores God, or the Absolute, but abandons the Hindu conception of the soul also. All things are in a state of flux, not only the universe but man also; his body is ever changing, and there is no such thing as a permanent soul. The idea, 'this is mine, this is myself', is the root of all evil, and salvation alone lies in Nirvana, which is beyond all this.

Much discussion has ranged round the Buddhist idea of no-soul (*anatta*). The Theravada (Hinayana) view, which most European Buddhists have followed, is that the doctrine of the soul, the *atman* of which the Brahmins made so much and of which the Upanishads are full, was deliberately rejected by the Buddha and that he and his followers never use this word except in a bad sense.

On the other hand, some Indian scholars, such as A. Coomaraswamy, have tried to show that the Hindu idea of a soul is present in Buddhism. There are numerous references in the early scriptures to the 'person' (significantly called *pudgala* and not *atman*), and also traces of a belief in consciousness as a permanent centre of personality. This has been likened to what we call 'conscience', or a higher Self. There are frequent exhortations to take the Self as a refuge, and in the popular but late Dhammapada we read: 'Rouse yourself by your self (*atta*), examine yourself by your self. Guarded by your self and attentive, you will live happy.'

[6]S. C. Chatterjee, in K. W. Morgan's *Religion of the Hindus*, p. 245 .

What may be said amid this debate, which still rages, is that the Buddhist teaching was different from the Hindu, that it was opposed to speculation, and was concerned with the practical aim of gaining deliverance.

It may also be noted that all schools of Buddhism hold beliefs that might appear to us to be inconsistent with a negation of soul. The Buddha on his enlightenment, for example, is believed by all Buddhists to have gained knowledge of his previous existences, of all other men, and of all future times. The greatly popular Jataka tales are 547 birth-stories in which the Buddha tells of his previous births as bird, animal and man.

Every other Buddhist conqueror can also see all births and deeds: 'A Tathagata remembers a variety of former habitations . . . with his purified god-like vision surpassing that of men, he sees beings as they are dying and being born, and he comprehends that beings are mean or excellent according to the consequence of *karma*.'[7]

## II

The belief in rebirth is common to Hindus and Buddhists, and in fact to most Asian and African peoples. Plato, as we know, and some of the Greeks accepted it, and perhaps some of the Jews and early Christians. But the belief was later frowned upon by orthodox Christianity and crops up among us chiefly in poets and novelists, toying with the theme of 'I have been here before.'

It seems that the Aryan invaders of India had no idea of rebirth, at least if one is to judge from the Vedic writings. Perhaps it was held by the mysterious Indus people, or the Dravidians, and was one of the revenges in which the subdued folk had their own back by introducing their own beliefs into the coarse Homeric polytheism of the Aryans. But rebirth makes its appearance in the Upanishads about men working out their deeds after death and then being reborn until 'they rise up towards the worlds, and go the same round as before'. The moral content of the belief comes clear, as it is in Plato's myth of Er the Armenian. Thus a classic passage in the Upanishads says that 'Those whose conduct has been good will quickly attain good birth, the birth of a Brahman, or a Kshatriya, or a Vaisya. But those whose conduct has been evil will quickly attain an evil birth, the birth of a dog or a hog or a Chandala.'[8]

Hindus and Buddhists do not believe in rebirth simply as a natural succession, but they give a cause, *karma* (deeds) for the continued succession of lives and their good and bad nature. In this the Indian belief is different from the common African (and pre-Aryan?) idea, which is that rebirth is natural, and is not a judgment on good or evil living. Africans welcome rebirth, in the same family, into this bright sunny world, so

[7]Majjhima-nikaya, 1, 70.
[8]Chandogya Upanishad, 5, 10.

much better than the cold shades of the underworld. But in India and the East, strenuous efforts are made to escape from the wheel or chain of birth and becoming.

Buddhists say that rebirth is caused by craving (*tanha*), and that when this desire is overcome men attain to Nirvana, which is 'going out' or cooling of the flame of desire. This craving is traced back to ignorance, as it is in Hindu thought also with its great stress on knowledge. This is not ordinary ignorance, however, but lack of knowledge of higher truth, or lack of spiritual insight which leaves men in the clutches of desire, and so they are forced to remain in the cycle of rebirth. Deliverance comes through dispelling this ignorance.

One might ask the Buddhist, what is reborn, if there is no soul to be born? And it is true that Buddhists prefer to speak of rebirth, rather than reincarnation, which suggests a being reincarnating in various lives. Mr. Christmas Humphreys, president of the English Buddhist Society, in a review of L. D. Weatherhead's *Case for Re-incarnation*, says that he agrees with Dr. Weatherhead in a belief in rebirth, but can only say that 'what is reborn is that which is reborn'. Once again there is an aversion to speculation.

The Buddhist goes on to hold out the goal of Nirvana as the supreme aim of all endeavour. This word Nirvana comes from a root meaning extinguished for lack of fuel, and so means the extinction of becoming on this mortal plane. The goal of Nirvana is attained by right endeavour and pure life. It can be attained in this life, and at the death of the physical body the saint (*arhat*) attains final or Parinirvana. This is cessation of existence, at least as we know existence.

Buddhist teaching on Nirvana, like that on the soul or self, is hedged about with negations. It is defined as 'the stopping of becoming in Nirvana'. Yet it is not nothingness; it could be defined as the attainment of Being, as distinct from becoming. In a famous comment it is said, 'Because it is attainable by means of the special cognition perfected by unfailing effort, because it was spoken of by the Omniscient One, because it has existence in the ultimate meaning, Nirvana is not non-existent. So this was said: 'There is, monks, an unborn, not become, not made, but compounded.'[9]

## III

The great majority of Buddhists and Hindus do not breathe in the rarefied atmosphere of their scholars. A. Foucher, that great Buddhist scholar, in his last masterpiece, declares: 'The immense majority of the faithful, not troubled by the theories of the doctors about the disintegration of the soul after death, limit their future ambitions to the joys prom-

[9] *Visuddhimagga*, 507, from *Buddhist Texts*, ed. E. Conze, p. 102.

ised to all the friends of virtue in the heavens which are graduated according to their merit. Nirvana is for them a synonym of Paradise. We have heard a Sinhalese guide, in the famous Temple of the Tooth at Kandy, showing a group of pilgrims a mural painting representing the celestial mansions and applying to the voluptuous scene the sacred name — Nibbana!'[10]

No doubt the monks of the neighbouring monastery understand things differently, but many of these also think of Nirvana as a haven of grace, a port of refuge, a place of quiet if not of eternal beatitude. This is strangely like the 'eternal rest' which is invoked for the dead in the Christian liturgy.

In Mahayana Buddhism, in China, Japan and Tibet, as is well known, there are many heavens and heavenly beings. The bodhisattvas, beings of enlightenment, renounce Nirvana until every being is saved—a noble form of universalism. In the Pure Land sects the great goal is the Western Paradise, where Amitabha reigns. Thither he guides the ship of salvation, over the seas of sorrow, to the haven in the west. The Western Paradise is said to be a stage on the road to ultimate Nirvana, but it tends to replace it and is described in luscious terms, strikingly reminiscent of the Book of Revelation. Paradise is a heaven of jewels and music, trees, birds and lotuses, from whence all sin and sorrow has been banished.

> 'What language can tell of the beauty and power
> Which adorn that pure and shining land?
> That land where flowers fade not for age
> Where golden streets shine as crystal pure water.
> The land which rises in lofty terraces,
> Blazing with diamonds, gleaming with jade;
> Whose dwellings are fragrant leafy bowers . . .
> There stands Amitabha in shining apparel . . .
> Up from the abyss each human soul he draws,
> Lifts them up to his palace of peace.'[11]

To offset the heavens, there are also many hells; 18 great hells, 500 smaller, and 1,000 little hells. Dante pales compared with this; but the parallels are striking.

Similarly, in popular Hindu belief the subtle discussions on merging the soul with the Absolute are left aside in visions of heavens and hells. The soul of the dying has to cross the river of death, as in so many other religions, from Homer to Bunyan. The wicked are judged by Yama, the god of the dead, who imposes on them punishments truly 'oriental' in their fantastic imagining. The difference from Dante here is that these pains are not purgatorial but retributive, and after bearing the punishment

[10] *La Vie du Bouddha*, p. 326.

[11] The Song of the White Lotus, tr. by K. Reichelt, in *Religion in Chinese Garment*, pp. 125–126.

for its past deeds, the soul starts afresh in a new life on earth. The virtuous may go to one of several heavens, according to the deity served. There again the streets are paved with gold, the houses built of jewels, and the senses entranced with luscious fruit, celestial music and cooling streams.[12]

Enlightened Hindus and Buddhists, like enlightened Christians and Muslims, have always known that these fanciful descriptions were but to satisfy the image-loving propensity of the vulgar. Only now are the majority of Protestants getting away from the cruder images, unless we are returning thence with the help of Jung, or Aldous Huxley and mescalin.

* * * *

In comparing other beliefs with our own, the Hindu and Buddhist might say that the Christian view of a life of three-score years and ten was a very short trial run in which to get rid of all egoism and attain an eternity of bliss (unless we believe in progress in heaven, substituting purgatory for hell, as G. K. Chesterson said). The general Indian view of ageless pre-existence, births and deaths, and final deliverance might seem not only to give a nobler scale for the soul, but also to fit in better with modern scientific views of infinite space and time and the immense scale of the universe. If it be replied that the notion of rebirth gives less urgency to good conduct now, it can only be answered that Eastern religions lay great stress on the need to escape from the round of existence, and also have lofty moral codes. Right endeavour, work out your own salvation, rather than depend on salvation from without, is the theme of much Buddhist teaching.

The description of Nirvana as 'unborn', unoriginated, uncreated, unformed', has been compared by some writers with the Christian mystical speech of God in negatives, the divine Darkness or Abyss. Whether an impersonal Nirvana can, or does, serve as a Buddhist substitute for God is debatable. The person of the Buddha himself, though ostensibly set up only as a model for imitation, is so ubiquitously represented in statue, perhaps more than any other religious figure in the world, and in both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, that imitation of him seems to turn to adoration, and meditation to prayer.

The final goal of the Christian mystics has been the vision of God, union with him lying beyond the sensuous imagery of Revelation. Even the highly personalistic Wesley found words lacking here when he wrote of being

> Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea
> And lost in thine immensity.

The Hindu is closest to the Christian here (if one excepts the Muslim Sufi). For the long wrestling with the soul and the Absolute, the *atman*

[12]L. S. S. O'Malley, *Popular Hinduism*, pp. 11–12.

and the Brahman, finds its climax in the Bhagavad-Gita, and in the many later movements of *bhakti* devotion.

Here, in the concluding chapter of the Gita, after the varying arguments of the early parts of the book, the way of devotion to a God of grace, and finding of eternal peace in him as the goal of all the endeavours of this life, is set out with abiding charm:

> 'Flee unto him for shelter with all thy being.
> By his grace shalt thou obtain supreme peace
> and eternal abode . . .
> Fix thy mind on Me; be devoted to Me . . .
> So shalt thou come to Me.
> I promise thee truly, for thou art dear to Me.'

# CONTEMPORARY ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEATH

By Rev. John D. Pearce-Higgins, M.A., H.C.F., Vicar of Putney, Chairman of the Research Group of the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical Study

If we are to believe Miss Dorothy Sayers, medieval thinkers and the medieval world as a whole had a clear conception of 'eternity' and 'infinity' set over against the world of space and time and totally different from it. It was only, she says, after the Reformation and the Renaissance of learning that childishly literal notions of a localized heaven extended in measurable time began to creep out of popular mythology into the minds of educated people.

I do not know whether she is right or not, but there is no doubt that a great break occurred at the Reformation. We are the heirs to the beliefs of the Reformation divines who modified to a considerable extent the medieval eschatology, an admirable account of which can be found in Dr. A. E. Tillyard's study, *The Elizabethan World Picture*. Here in a still geocentric age we see laid out the whole system of spheres from the sublunary to the empyrean in concentric circles, with the Jacob's ladder of angelic communication set between heaven and earth, and operating as a close link between man and heaven, which one of the more adventurous Elizabethan writers pictures as some fifty million miles distant from this earth.

*Angelic ministry.* Our reformers did not much care for the angelic ministry (even though retaining the collect for St. Michael and All Angels in the Prayer Book) or any theology which involved the possibility of conscious activity in the world into which man entered after death. They had observed all too clearly the deplorable effects upon laity and priesthood of the various practices associated with the cult of the dead, such as indulgences, masses, chantry priests and the whole financial nexus connected therewith, and they found ready to hand a biblical theology which enabled them to dispense with these practical effects of the medieval beliefs in an intermediate state which they so much disliked. They adopted the doctrine of the 'long sleep', and following Luther rather than Calvin maintained that a man's accounts were fully made up on the day of his death, and that thereafter, until the general resurrection, he lay sleeping in his grave, unconscious and inactive, and therefore inaccessible to human prayers or thoughts. As Bishop Coverdale put it, the 'dead are past praying for'.

But in popular belief the medieval ideas died hard. They also still are found in the poets, notably Shakespeare, who displays a pre-Reformation attitude to these matters, while Spencer is medieval in outlook, and even in the next century John Milton affirms that millions of spiritual beings walk our earth unseen. Sir Thomas Browne throws scorn on those who disbelieve in angels. But the crabbed world of theology had its own

rigid outlook, and as our liturgies show, by 1662 all prayers for the dead were discontinued, mention of the angelic ministry (deleted from the Communion in 1552) is confined to one collect, and the Sursum Corda. A sort of dreadful iron curtain descended between the living and the dead, which has remained there for centuries, and has been fraught with the gravest consequences for our own times.

True, a few voices were raised in protest, among catholic churchmen on the one hand, and occasionally in other quarters. For instance, Glanville in his *Saducisumus triumphans* tried to prove to the Age of Reason from what we should to-day call psychic phenomena, the reality of survival, while John Wesley, after his alarming childhood experience with the poltergeist Old Jeffrey at Epworth rectory, stoutly affirms his belief in survival and the occasional appearances of the dead, and also in demonic possession. The belief in witches is, however, hardly relevant to this problem, since witches were held to be the victims of demonic possession, and not of possession by evil human spirits of the departed. So firmly was the doctrine of the long sleep clamped down upon popular belief that occasional ghostly manifestations only served to maintain that tension between theology and observation. The human race has, however, always found it possible to accept the most incompatible beliefs in these matters. The ancient Egyptians, for instance, seemed able to combine a belief in a celestial survival in the heavens with Ra, with a totally different conception of survival in the underworld with Osiris.

*Roman Catholicism.* The Roman Church always had a more fluid theology in these matters, and their doctrine of the ministry not only of angels but of the saints and their doctrine of purgatory had always kept alive on the minds of the laity the reality of the life after death in a way which was never done in the Protestant countries. The continued additions by canonization of new saints—and some of them very worthy saints at that—the practice of prayers for the departed and the whole doctrine of the ministry of intercession, prevented the Roman world from suffering from the theological hiatus between this world and the next which has been, I believe, the main cause of Protestant weakness in modern times. Indeed, Catholicism has remained basically an other-worldly religion as compared with Protestanism, which in recent times at least has tended to become a means of social amelioration in this world alone.

If you go into any Roman Catholic church, you will usually find a well-stocked bookstall, and on it you will find pamphlets with titles such as these: Hell, The Fact of Hell, The Soul here and hereafter, What happens after death? Death, The Resurrection of the body, Supernatural Life, The Beginning and End of Man, etc. What impresses one about these pamphlets is their range. They present a fairly complete and popular picture of what the average believer may expect to find when he or she reaches the other side, and no Catholic could complain that he had not

been warned or received definite instruction about the future life and its relation to our life here and now. Catholic teaching, unlike Protestant teaching, is not concentrated mainly on the organization of our life on this planet, but takes in wider view the whole picture of man's creation and purpose.

Compare this with the situation that prevails in the Protestant churches. How many pamphlets or how much instruction, even in Anglo-Catholic churches will you find dealing with the subject of Heaven and Hell, or purgatory or an intermediate state, or the Resurrection? Practically none.

When he retired from being head of B.B.C. broadcasting, Dr. Welch said that during his term of office he had read or heard some 6,000 talks and sermons, and of these only ONE had anything vital to say concerning the problem of survival.

I have started with this brief outline of the official views of the two great Churches, because in the case of the Protestant Churches I feel so strongly the point of Chaucer's gibe about the clergy and the laity, 'if gold rust, what shall iron do?' and the confusion in which men's minds are to-day concerning survival is in part due to the trumpet of the Protestant clergy giving so uncertain a sound that few have prepared themselves for the battle.

However, in the logic of history failure to teach the whole Catholic faith has always brought its own Nemesis in the form of sectarian protest. So the bleakness and barrenness of English Protestant teaching about the hereafter brought eventually the protests of Spiritualism and of Theosophy in the earlier part of the last century from outside the Church, and of Anglo-Catholics within it. Mrs. Eddy also, although she specifically denies in her teachings the possibility of spirit communication, by her assertion of the priority of mind over the body and the latter's unreality, gave a new twist to the problem of survival as it had hitherto been envisaged, and is anti-materialist in outlook.

*Resurrection of the body.* The Reformers held to the doctrine of the long sleep; they also adhered to a painfully materialistic view of the Resurrection and the final judgment, as we see in Article IV. Bishop Jewell goes out of his way to stress that at the Resurrection we shall have the same body, and he uses a wholly false analogy of the house-fly which he believed to die in the winter and reappear in the spring with the same body.[1] Protestant art took over completely the medieval pictures of the Doom, which used to be painted over the chancel arch of the parish churches, and can be seen carved in stone on the tympanums and porches of many of the great continental cathedrals. Here we see the 'dreadful day of judgment' with the good rising to heaven and the wicked being

[1]Commentary on Thessalonians.

dragged off in chains to hell, and this belief was the popular one right down to the end of the last century.

Here, then, very roughly, was the mental pabulum on which our fathers and ancestors in Britain and America were raised up. Joined to pre-Reformation poetry and hymns concerning the heavenly Jerusalem and the pearly gates of heaven, was this doctrine of the final awakening, which has perhaps been best enshrined in a hymn by that pillar of orthodoxy, Mrs. Alexander, in her monumental and abysmal classic, A. & M. 575, of which I quote a few verses:

> Within the churchyard side by side are many long low graves;
> And some have stones set over them, on some the green grass waves;

(acute observation there of the untidy state of many country churchyards!)

> Full many a little Christian child, woman and man lies there;
> And we pass by them every time when we go in to prayer.
> They cannot hear our footsteps come, they do not see us pass,
> They cannot feel the bright warm sun that shines upon the grass.
> They do not hear when the great bell is ringing overhead,
> They cannot rise and come to church with us, for they are dead.
> But we believe a day shall come, when all the dead will rise,
> When they who sleep down in the grave will open again their eyes . . . etc.
> And Christians only fall asleep to wake again in heaven . . . !

The extraordinary lack of imagination which this and similar hymns show can hardly fail to make us appreciate with what enthusiasm the new ideas of Spiritualism, with its teaching about the spirit body, and Theosophy with its doctrine of Reincarnation were greeted in the middle of the last century by intelligent people who were dissatisfied with Protestant eschatology. Spiritualism, as you will no doubt recall, arose from events which took place in a lonely farmstead in Hydesville (Ontario) in 1848, where the Fox sisters lived with their parents. In spite of the somewhat unhappy history in later life of the sisters, and of a recantation by one of them under the stress of penury, I have no doubt at all in my own mind that the events were genuine. At least it provides evidence of what we now call extra-sensory perception, for the ineluctable fact remains that the body of the murdered commercial traveller whose supposed raps were, by a stroke of genius of one of the sisters, interpreted as a code for communication, was discovered bricked up behind the cellar of the farmhouse many years later, and the truth of the communications then established.[2] But true or false, the impetus given by these events started a long train of spiritualistic and mediumistic activity, much of it undoubtedly false, but a sufficient amount of it sufficiently convincing to give rise to a new religion which the orthodox Churches of the time condemned, expressing their fears in no uncertain terms.

The Romans indeed took spiritualism in their stride. 'This is nothing

[2]See Tweedale, *Man's Survival after Death*, pp. 437-447, for the evidence.

new,' they said, 'we have always known about this sort of thing, but it must only be done under the aegis of the Church. To seek for communication is wrong, but when saints and heavenly visitants come of their own accord, that is all right. We are not worried.' But Protestantism was extremely worried, and reacted strongly against the new religion. So, too, did many of the intelligentsia, who found Mr. Robert Browning's new poem concerning D. D. Home (Mr. Sludge), the Medium, very much to their taste.

The reaction of the Churches to Theosophy, with its teachings of Reincarnation, was equally hostile, but it did not appear to occur to the Churchmen that these movements were a serious criticism of their own position or that there was any weakness in it. Towards the close of the century, however, a considerable movement occurred among the Anglo-Catholic party towards a more liberal eschatology. Perhaps the impetus to this was given by one not a member of their party, but by that very fine scholar Dean Farrar. His sermons in 1878, when a canon of Westminster, subsequently published as the *Eternal Hope*, were the first sign of a discontent in Protestantism with its traditional eschatology. Week by week he filled the Abbey to capacity. Dean Lucock of Lincoln, also in 1878, contributed to this trend, and his books, *After Death* and the *Intermediate State*, and other works by writers such as Dr. J. Mason and Rev. E. A. Down at the turn of the century, all moving in a Romeward direction, none the less endeavoured to mitigate the rigours of Protestant eschatology. I suppose it would be fair to say that a very large number of clergy to-day have about reached the position of Lucock and his friends, but of course their impact has been but gradual, and the clergy seem to have been slow as a whole to realize the implications of the attack upon their traditional views which both Spiritualism and Theosophy contained.

*The 1914-18 War*

While the liberal trends which Dean Farrar represented had gradually grown in strength in the Church, and the rise of the Modern Churchmen marked a move in the direction of the larger hope and a wider eschatology (received, however, with marked hostility by the clergy of the Church), the logic of events was preparing a bombshell for the Protestant Churches as a whole. The world war of 1914-18 shattered the ivory tower of their complacency. When the young men were dying by their thousands in the mud and squalor of Flanders, many of them with no bodies to rest in peace anywhere, since they had been blown to pieces, the Church continued to deal out the ancient language of the burial service, and continued in those hoary platitudes, so cuttingly flayed by Studdert-Kennedy in his poems, to assure the sorrowing relatives that this death was the will of God, and that the young men would somehow rise again at some future date.

It is little to be wondered at that Spiritualism stepped in, and filled the great gap left by the inadequacies of Protestant teaching, not merely because it claimed through mediumship to be able to establish communication with the beloved dead, but also because it painted a much more genial picture of their future state.

How much ground the Churches lost during the war years through their failure to give any other than vaguely philosophical consolation to the mourners it is not hard to assess when we consider the position of the Churches before and after that war. The Church of England was not unaware of its failure, and one of the Committees of the 1920 Lambeth Conference reported on Spiritualism. The Committee grudgingly admitted the inroads made by Spiritualism, especiaily upon the ranks of those to whom Christian teaching had made little appeal. While distinguishing between psychic research as such, e.g. as carried on by the S.P.R. and other bodies, and the religious movement of Spiritualism, it took a very limited view of the results of psychic research as such, and reported in a most hostile manner on the claims of Spiritualism as a religion. It reaffirmed the traditional beliefs of Christianity without really meeting the main points of attack, and made those now customary Anglican affirmations about the Communion of Saints, and the community of the living and the dead in Christ, which I have never found to carry much conviction to those suffering from the blow of the death of a loved one, especially in early youth. It refused altogether to consider the empirical evidence for a type of survival somewhat different from that envisaged by orthodox Protestant theology.

*Between the Wars*

I must now diverge for a moment on to the sociological aspects of the case. The years between the wars were years of great social upheaval. Radical thinkers in the Church of England which had already had great pioneers in social welfare from the days of Frederick D. Maurice, continued to turn much attention and to talk much good sense on the subject of social conditions. The Industrial Christian Fellowship, movements like the Franciscan Brotherhood of the Way, kept the urgency of social justice to the front of the Church's programme. One has only to read the Grey Book, for instance, produced in preparation of Prayer Book revision in 1928, to realize how actively awake the consciences of the leaders of thought were to the inadequacies of the existing social capitalist system. The problems of unemployment and social injustice are very much in their minds. The arrival of William Temple in the see at York and the Malvern Conference marked the culmination of a movement for the betterment of the conditions of the underdog of which the Church of England has every reason to be proud. Yet this social thinking, I believe, conceals a very serious flaw in the theology of the Church of England.

For while the outbreak of the 1939 war found the Church very well armed with ideological weapons for dealing with the crisis and we did not fall into the jingoistic and hypocritical errors which stained the apologetic of the 1914-18 utterances of the Church, the Church was unprepared as ever to deal with those eschatological problems which always come to the fore in wartime. Under the impact of Marxism, the Church had been well aware of the dangers of preaching 'pie in the sky when you die', and had taken to heart Kingsley's warning against using religion as an 'opiate of the people', so much so that hardly any teaching about the hereafter was being given at all from the pulpits, as the statement of Dr. Welch already quoted clearly shows. There had been therefore a double incentive to sociological preaching, not merely a genuine creative concern for the welfare of the people, but also a negative escape-mechanism from the task of trying to tidy up or think out the whole body of doctrine about the hereafter and of man's ultimate destiny. This was urgently called for by the new unfolding vision of man's place in the universe revealed by the new astronomical, geological, biological and physical sciences. It is my firm belief, in spite of all that has been written by individual pioneers and liberal thinkers, that as a whole the Churches have resolutely refused to face the implications of the Copernican view of the universe, and we in our generation are paying the inevitable nemesis of this intellectual cowardice. I find, for instance, that the majority of teachers of religion in schools have no idea at all of how to link up the theory of evolution with the Christian revelation. Over and over again, for instance, I find young people whom I am interviewing saying something like this: Well, you see, there are two views of the world: there is the scientific evolutionary outlook and there is the biblical picture, and you have to choose between them. This is a truly tragic position, concerning which I should have thought the Modern Churchmen's Union could make some serious and valuable contribution.

But the importance of being able to give a proper assessment of man's past history pales into insignificance before the need to be able to answer the problem of the future. It is this neglect of a clear teaching about man's ultimate destiny, in the light of modern knowledge, which has led to the crisis which faces all Protestant thought to-day. This also is the main reason, in my opinion, why the Church of Rome appeals to so many people, because she is at least giving answer to the fundamental problems of life AND DEATH. Whether she is giving the right answers is another matter—I think she is not, but she is at least giving *some* answer.

Official Protestantism seems to have no teaching to offer with any degree of conviction or amount of detail equal to that supplied by the Roman Church on matters of the geography of heaven, and indeed she does not seem interested in the hereafter or the ultimate destiny of man, in spite of the urgency of the problems posed by the threats of the H-bomb

to human security with its vast possibilities of mass destruction on a scale hitherto unknown.

Is there anything, for instance, in Protestant literature to compare with Newman's 'Dream of Gerontius' as a popular exposition of the after life? It is little wonder that this poem in its beautiful setting by Elgar fills halls and cathedrals with enthusiastic Protestant listeners because, however imperfectly, it is supplying a want in their lives.

The Church of England lost a magnificent opportunity of taking this bull by the horns, both in 1920 and later, when in 1936 the Rev. Maurice Elliott, whose recent death I greatly deplore, and who had for years, in spite of much persecution, endeavoured to interest the Churches in the study of psychic phenomena, at last succeeded in persuading Archbishop Lang to appoint a committee to investigate these matters. This committee, which includes three leading members of this Union, presented its report in 1938, but the report was suppressed, and it was not until 1940 that the Spiritualist newspaper somehow got possession of a somewhat garbled version. Rather than let this version be published, Canon Anson personally corrected it before its publication by *Psychic News*, and thus the astonished world learned that this extremely well qualified committee had by a majority vote of 9—3 made a cautious but affirmative statement with regard to the reality of the evidence supplied by psychic phenomena on the subject of survival after death. The incalculable harm done to the Church of England by the way in which this report was given to the world is still with us to-day, for it has strengthened the appearance of intellectual dishonesty with which the Church seems to face the issues of modern science in all its forms.

The report, as a matter of fact, is most cautious and judicious. It states, for instance, that by rigid scientific standards (which, however, may not be applicable to this type of study) 'the strictly scientific verdict of personal survival can only be one of non-proven'. It then goes on to add, 'on the other hand certain psychic experiences of individuals, including certain experiences with mediums, make a strong *prima facie* case for survival and for the possibility of spirit communications, while philosophical, ethical and religious considerations may be held to weigh heavily on the same side. When every possible explanation of these communications has been given, and all doubtful evidence set aside, it is very generally agreed that there remains some element as yet unexplained. We think it probable that the hypothesis that they proceed in some cases from discarnate spirits is the true one'. The report then goes on to criticize, in much the same terms as the 1920 committee, the weakness of Spiritualism as being more centred in man than in God and in its deficiency in adequate theology. But it then continues: 'But if Spiritualism does in fact make so strong an appeal to some, it is at least in part because the Church has not yet proclaimed or practised its faith with sufficient conviction. There

is frequently little real fellowship even between the living, and the full and intimate reality of the communion of the saints is often a dead letter. (And here, in passing, I would make a sad comment that, as far as I can see, neither the ministry of angels nor the communion of saints seems to figure at all largely in the minds of our modern liturgical reforms.) Spiritualism claims in fact to be making accessible a reality which the Church has proclaimed but of which it has seemed only to offer the shadow. This is of course only a part of the truth.'

The final words of the report urge that representatives of the Church should keep in touch with groups of intelligent persons who believe in Spiritualism—a recommendation which has never been officially implemented. Unofficially, the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical Study, founded five years ago by Col. R. Lester and the Rev. Maurice Elliott, seeks to carry out this recommendation, and although it has not yet received official recognition, it numbers over a dozen bishops among its vice-presidents, and is working to interest clergy and laity alike in the evidence for survival and the need for a real belief in the gifts of the spirit and the communion of the living and the departed.

I have given this lengthy study of the history of the Protestant belief in the hereafter because without it, it seems to me, a mere recital of the present beliefs of the English people on this matter, as adduced by recent mass surveys and polls, would have little meaning. These views can be found in various places such as the Mass Observation Study, sponsored by the Ethical Union and published by Gollancz in 1947 under the title of *Puzzled People*, in Rowntree and Laver's chapter in their *English Life and Leisure*, published in 1951, and in the most recent study by Geoffrey Gorer, *Exploring English Character*, published in 1955. *Puzzled People* is perhaps the least valuable of these studies, since in addition to the natural theological puzzlement of a people who have received so little adequate teaching by their spiritual leaders, there is a hangover from war neurosis which somewhat confuses the findings of the report. *English Life and Leisure* has only one brief chapter on religion, and so I have found Gorer's most recent study the most valuable. I might also add that I have done my own studies with great care on this matter during the course of interviewing some three hundred young people who have come to my study for periods of up to three hours in the pre-marriage interview, and with whom I have always discussed the problems of survival. All three reports, however, more or less agree on the figures of the numbers of people in Britain who believe in a future life.

*Puzzled People* tell us that two-thirds of the men and four-fifths of the women of this country have some sort of a belief in God. Since a belief in God might be taken also to imply a belief in survival, it is interesting to note that of the non-churchgoing 32 per cent believe in some sort of survival but 68 per cent of them do not. While of the church-going popula-

tion (Anglican), only just over half, 54 per cent, believe in survival, including reincarnation. As one Church of England priest in this survey commented, 'I don't know what people believe when they say the Creed. I've been attending death in a religious house, and mentioned the life after death. And they say, 'Is there really any life after death? I didn't know there was any.' *Puzzled People* concludes, 'One person in three says definitely they do not believe in an after-life. Of the rest, half are definite in saying that they believe, and the other half in various stages of indecision. Disbelief and indecision is only a little less frequent among those who attend Church of England services than it is among people as a whole. One-fifth of those who say they believe in God, and a quarter of those who go to church or to services are definite in their disbelief in life after death, another fifth of each are undecided. This seems hardly a happy basis on which to found a religious revival!'

Gorer's figures are not very dissimilar. He says that 47 per cent of the population do state they believe. Thirty are uncertain, and 22 per cent definitely disbelieve. Of these 39 per cent men and 56 per cent women believe, 28 per cent men and 14 per cent women do not, 31 per cent men and 29 per cent women are uncertain. We see that a large per centage of British men do not believe in a future life.

If we take Gorer's figures as a rough guide, we get the picture that over half the population either positively disbelieve or are uncertain about a future life, and that less than half do believe. Of this of course many are Roman Catholics, only a tiny proportion of whom do not believe.

Remembering the Mass Observation figures about believers inside the Church of England being only about half of the Church members as an alarming phenomenon, the next most remarkable factor which emerges in Gorer's study is the nature of these beliefs. Of the 47 per cent who believe, about half answered the question as to what sort of a life this would be and gave detailed answers. And here we come to the crucial point in my paper.

Only 14 per cent women and 11 per cent men of those who believe, believe in the biblical picture of heaven and hell, and/or purgatory, or make any reference to biblical imagery. It is quite probable that a considerable number of those who state that they do not believe in an after-life are reacting away from the biblical picture, as we find 5 per cent women and 2 per cent men who do believe in an after-life stating, 'Not as described in Revelations, or not the Anglican picture,' and this may hold for some of the non-believers also.

Many years ago, Maud Royden pointed out that hell was discredited, and our surveys bear witness to this. Three-fifths of the population state that they believe neither in hell nor in the devil. The remainder are almost equally divided between belief and uncertainty. 20 per cent believe in the devil and 18 per cent in hell. The figures for uncertainty

are just the reverse. A certain number of people have a metaphysical belief in hell and evil, as 'e.g. making your own hell inside you'. Gorer concludes that with the major sanctions of Christianity disappearing, the concept of judgment becomes meaningless. Belief in judgment is very uncommon even in that proportion of the English people who believe in a future life. Even stretching things, only 14 per cent believe in judgment —the 14 per cent who give biblical answers to their picture of heaven.

The picture of heaven or the hereafter given are many and varied, but most of them assume that heaven will automatically be attained to. Slightly more than a quarter of those who believe envisage an eternity of untroubled leisure. ('Life at the age you liked best, in company of people you most like and doing all the things you found most enjoyable on earth.')

I like the one from a young woman at Bishop's Stortford. 'A happy place with no colour bars, no class distinction, no intonation of speech, a place where everyone will have a job to do, no matter whether he was a king or a peasant in this world, a place where there will be a common language. Jesus Christ and his twelve disciples will be a form of government; there will be no opposition, for there will be nothing to oppose.' Reunion with one's loved ones also forms a large part of such beliefs.

The idea of judgment, or moral retribution, seems hardly to appear at all. Most assume heaven to be automatically received after this life. A correspondent recently sent me a remarkable version of this belief which appeared in an Anglican newspaper obituary notice, which I cannot forbear to quote:

> The trumpets sound forth, St. Peter cries, 'Come',
> The pearly gates open, and in walks MUM.

I sincerely hope she does! I also sincerely hope she was fit to go there!

For one of the things that must surely appear most evident from these studies is that the absence of a belief in an intermediate state must for most people cheapen the idea of heaven. In fact to any rational observer who has any idea of the greatness, goodness, purity, wisdom and power and love of God, the idea of immediate access into his presence, in my opinion, must appear terrifying and indeed improbable. As we look at our fellow-men and ourselves, we may perhaps express the charitable opinion that we are neither good enough for heaven nor bad enough for hell. Official Anglicanism has no doctrine of stages of progress, although of course this belief could easily be deduced from the words of our Lord in St. John xiv, ' In my father's home are many stages, if it were not so I would have told you.'

Gorer then goes on to state—and my own experience bears this out—that only 6 per cent of the population express a belief in the full dogma of Christianity, while 11 per cent believe in reincarnation here, and

2 per cent in a life on another planet. Gorer adds, 'The relative prevelance of the belief in reincarnation (explicit statements come from 252 individuals out of a population of 500) is perhaps the most surprising single piece of information to be derived from this research. Reincarnation is a belief of the major Asiatic religions, but it is contrary to the creeds of all the established religions of Europe and the Near East. The Theosophists imported it into Europe at the end of the last century, but they comprise a minute portion of my sample; and apart from Presbyterians (by far the most orthodox of all the Protestant denominations, I fancy), some members of every denomination subscribe to this belief, which is evenly distributed throughout the population.'

And now I come to the final conclusion, which is of course that these surveys demonstrate among the Protestant Churches the almost complete breakdown of the Christian mythology or eschatological picture, and its almost complete replacement by some form of Spiritualistic type of belief. I hope this fact will receive the attention of the wider Church clergy, and lastly, as the inescapable fact, viz. that Christian traditional eschatology is dead, as dead as a door nail, and that it requires to be replaced by another if the Church is to survive, for a Church without an eschatology is a Church which is on the way out.

If you lengthen your ropes, you must strengthen your stakes, said Isaiah, no doubt an experienced camper! Europe has lengthened her ropes of knowledge to include the whole mighty universe with its teeming millions of galaxies, its thousands of millions of years of the time process, its infinitely great and its microscopically small. Has it strengthened its religious stakes to take the strain? We speak, even in this Conference, about Christ and the incarnation, but what of Christ in the universe? We speak of life here or even life after death, but what of life on other planets? It seems as though our picture of life three or four score years and ten is so insignificant that countless lives are required for the fulfilment of our spiritual destiny and the attainment to the fullness of the stature of the sons of God.

I am grateful for Dr. Fish's recital of his Roman Catholic Catechism with its assertion of the immortality and eternity of the human soul. I am sure that in our future teaching this must be our starting point. This is borne out by the empirical evidence both in the East and in the West. We live in an empirical age, and we have developed what Steiner calls 'an onlooker consciousness'. This has produced wonderful scientific results for us, but has detached us from that very world in which we live. It is surely to some extent justifiable to apply the empirical method also to problems such as psychic phenomena, and the proofs of survival. And if evidence exists that survival takes place in a different way from that traditionally taught by the Christian Churches, we should surely accept it, just as the early Judaic converts to Christianity accepted the empirical picture

of resurrection and of survival in a somewhat different form to that in which they had been brought up. If such evidence should also show us that reincarnation was the mode of human progress, we should have to accept that also, as indeed quite a number of early Christian fathers of repute, such as Origen and Clement, and, I believe, Justin Martyr. (Reincarnation was only finally condemned by the not very reputable Twelfth Council of Constantinople in 455 A.D.) But 'onlooker consciousness' would of course not be enough. We should also have to immerse ourselves in the universe of experience and seek by new practices of meditation and the raising of the spiritual awareness, such, for instance, as Anthroposophus recommends (not the lowering in mediumship of the spiritual beings to our level, but rather the raising of the human consciousness to such a level of spiritual awareness that it might not only possess the practical gifts of the spirit, as did the early Christians, healing speaking with tongues, discernment of spirits, etc.), but also might have that awareness of the inner world of spirits which Rudolf Steiner had and which many sensitives also to-day possess, but which is such a rare gift that we are almost able to repeat the words of the Bible concerning the days of Samuel: 'The word of the Lord was very precious in those days, there was no open vision.' It seems to me that unless this spiritual awareness is reached and provides the strong stakes, we shall not be able to hold down the tent of civilization with its dangerously extended ropes, but it will be blown away by the blast of some atomic explosion in comparison with which the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha will seem a mere puff of wind. Finally, may I conclude with the words of the great Alfred North Whitehead, who expressed it as his opinion that that religion would survive in the future which succeeded in making most sense of the time process. Will that Church be the Church of England, I wonder? Surely not in its present frame of mind.

# IMMORTALITY AND HUMANISM

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Contemporary existentialist thinkers have, as is now well known, occupied themselves very much with the idea of death; and for the purposes of this discussion, by 'humanism' we shall mean the thought of those secular thinkers in the movement commonly called Existentialism. We shall examine therefore the attitude to death displayed in the work of Heidegger, Sartre and Jaspers.

For Heidegger, human existence is fundamentally a matter of care (*Sorge*). Man finds that his being is in advance of itself—that is, he finds himself already existing before he has found out what it means to exist. He is already concerned about the world before he has discovered the proper relationship of these factors to his own possibilities. The *Dasein* can never be regarded as a totality.[1] As long as the Dasein has not reached the end of its being—in the world it remains incomplete, always keeping some possibility in reserve. On the other hand, when it will have reached this end, it will at the same time cease to exist and be observable. Death is the end whereby a man's existence becomes complete, and man's capacity to anticipate death, to see it as the context within which every moment falls, is the basis of any attempt to grasp his existence as a whole, as an organic unity. But at once there is a difficulty in the way we talk of this completion or end. Do we not speak of it as an event which at the moment is not presented to our inspection in history but will sometime be so presented? Unfortunately, says Heidegger, there can be no doubt that Death, even if it does lead the Dasein to its completion, also brings about its disappearance.[2]

To die is to enter nothingness, or at least no *Dasein* type of being, and therefore Death is something which cannot be experimentally investigated.[3] The funeral ceremonies with which we reverence the dead are means by which we stay with the person who even in death cannot be regarded in quite the same way as a thing. For some purposes in everyday discourses there can be a commutability of existence, but this is not true in the case of a fundamental reality such as death.[4] It is only in respect of the external functions of the community that one individual can be replaced by another. Heidegger is not therefore talking about death in general; he is talking about the individual anticipating his own death. Where death is concerned, no one can take any place—I have to go to my own dying.

[1]Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, pp. 236, 317. (*SZ.*)
[2]*SZ.*, p. 237.
[3]*SZ.*, p. 240.
[4]*SZ.*, p. 240.

Thus, Heidegger distinguishes two views of death—ontic (existential) and the ontological (existential). But there is another difficulty—that the solution of the problem of death depends on an experience of which we shall always be deprived. Death is not an experience we can first undergo and then understand. If we try to overcome this by considering the death of others, we are faced by the obvious limitation that, as Heidegger says, 'nobody can take away his dying from another'[5] Death is inseparable from Existence, for it too exists as 'mine'—'In so far as Death is, it is essentially "mine" '. Thus, however concerned I am about another's dying, I can never experience the act of dying as he does. It is only when I myself am brought to a similar position that I can really know what dying means.

We have mentioned the finality of death as being the experience of which we are always deprived in our attempts at understanding life. Heidegger is very much occupied with the idea of death as an end. Death is the end whereby a man's existence becomes complete, and man's ability to anticipate death, to see it as the context within which every moment falls, is the basis for every attempt to grasp his existence as an organic unity. It is thus important to isolate the sense in which we can properly speak of death as an end. It is the end of the Dasein only as the 'not yet' that 'will be'. It is not an end in the sense in which the final payment in a contract is the end of our debt. The final payment is not intrinsically different from the first payment. The 'not yet', which is death, is not a completion of this kind, for what the Dasein is to become is not attained by adding parts already existing but separate. Again, the incompleteness of the Dasein as related to death is not an incompleteness of knowledge. We often speak of things which are not completely known but are nevertheless legitimate units of knowledge. The 'not yet' of death affects the *being* of the Dasein, not our knowledge of it. The Dasein must become what it not yet is.[6] We might be led by this insistence on death as an organic potentiality to compare it with the maturing of fruit. Just as fruit becomes ripe at last, so does Dasein reach death. This is nearer the potentiality of death, but it is not quite the same kind of 'not yet'. The fruit will neither have this ripeness again nor has it had it before. It is not something added, either. Yet ripeness is different from death. The fruit which has ripened has reached perfection, but it is a romantic view of death that makes death the perfection of human life. Further, as soon as the fruit is ripe it is finished and done, but though Dasein is in a sense 'over' at death, its possibilities have not been exhausted as is the case with the fruit.[7]

[5] *SZ.*, p. 240.
[6] *SZ.*, pp. 241-4.
[7] *SZ.*, p. 244.

Finally, the sense in which death is an end is not that of cessation. It it not a matter of something putting an end to existence as we switch off the power of an engine. The various uses of 'end' and cessation are more applicable to objects than to the Dasein. In death the Dasein is not completed objectively. To die is not a 'being-at-the-end-of'. 'As soon as a man lives,' says Heidegger, 'he is old enough to die.'[8] The Dasein is, then, an existence-for-its-end. It is a being that projects itself 'towards' or 'for its own death'. Death is that unique potentiality of Dasein which involves *being no more* so that at the ontic level we can legitimately regard death as a 'perishing'. When the individual takes this potentiality upon himself he enters fully into the meaning of isolation, for death cuts off all relations to the world and to other human beings. Moreover, there is the possibility of escaping the anxiety connected with running forward to the thought of death. One can try to treat such anxiety as an occasional, morbid mood, but the effort works only so long as one remains at the unauthentic level. One runs away from the thought of death by becoming completely preoccupied with the world of one's care; tries to treat it exclusively as an external event, like any other event in nature; talks about the fact that people die without identifying the 'people' with 'I'. Hence one runs away from the kind of courage which alone can allow the full dread of death to arise and can stand face to face with it; by superficial attempts to reach tranquillity man estranges himself from his own innermost, absolute potentiality, and in the very effort to run away he betrays the fact that he is essentially concerned about death.

The authentic attitude towards death, on the other hand, enables a man to see his existence as 'thrown into being towards its own end'. It means freedom for death in the sense that all human potentialities are seen as accompanied by their one extreme potentiality, the impossibility of existence.[9] Here the individual enters into complete isolation because none of his concerns for the world or for other people can solve his problem; and since death cannot be overcome, it teaches him that the extreme potentiality of existence is that of renunciation. He sees all his other possibilities in their stark finitude and also understands other human lives as finite wholes which come to an end. He enters into the certainty of death not as an inevitable external happening, but as something whose inward significance is more certain than anything encountered in the world of objects. The indefiniteness of the moment of its occurrence becomes for him not the occasion for an indefinite postponement of having to face it, but rather the occasion for a continual confrontation with nothingness.

For Sartre death does not possess the supreme ontological importance attributed to it by Heidegger. Death is for Sartre subordinate to the fact

[8] *SZ.*, p. 245.
[9] *SZ.*, p. 266.

of my subjectivity. It is I who give my death meaning and not death which gives me meaning. Sartre rejects Heidegger's argument as circular. Heidegger's achievement, he says, was to give a philosophical expression of the humanization of death which had been revealed in the work of poets like Rilke and novelists like Malraux. But what does it mean to say that death belongs *à priori* to human reality? The first thing we must note about death, says Sartre, is its absurd character.[10] The hocus-pocus which Heidegger put over is easily disclosed. It begins by individualizing the death of each of us by indicating that it is the death of a person, of an individual—'the one thing no one can do for me'. Then it uses this individuality it has conferred on death to individualize the Dasein itself, saying that by freely projecting itself towards this unique possibility the Dasein can achieve authentic existence. The circularity of this argument is seen, says Sartre, if we ask how it can be shown that death has this individuality and the power of conferring it. It is all very well to say that no one can do my dying for me. But then from this point of view none of my possibilities can be projected by someone other than me irrespective of whether it is an authentic or inauthentic existence. Thus no one else can do my loving for me, no one can give my lectures for me. All this has nothing to do with the question of whether the personality is conquered by the banality of daily living. It follows from the ipseity which Heidegger recognizes as Dasein—'Dasein is mine'. Thus, says Sartre, there is no peculiar virtue about my death—it only becomes *my* death as I put it in the perspective of my subjectivity. 'It is my subjectivity, defined by the prereflexive Cogito which makes something subjective and irreplaceable of my death and not my death which gives my for-itself its irreplaceable ipseity.'[11] Then death is not *my* possibility of no longer being present in the world but rather the ever-possible negation of all my possibilities, which is outside my possibility. Death could not be my real possibility because it cannot even be one of *my* possibilities.

Further, death is for Sartre the triumph of the point of view of other persons over the point of view that I am on my own. The existence of other persons is my hell. Estrangement is the basic characteristic of all man's relations. The reality of other selves is disclosed by an analysis of my consciousness, for among its objects is a special class which is not at the disposal of my plans and desires as things are. The most distinctive characteristic of the other person is that he can *look* at me,[12] and when he does I feel myself entering his field of reference as an object related to his interests. My reply to the threat of the other's subjectivity will consist of efforts to keep him imprisoned within his objectivity. This is a precarious activity, since at any moment the intrusion of the other person's look may

[10]Sartre, *L'être et le néant*, (*EN.*), p. 617.
[11]*EN.*, p. 619.
[12]*EN.*, pp. 310-64.

reveal the insecurity of my position and degrade me to an object. This process can only be ended in death because it is only the dead who can become permanent objects removed for ever from the possibility of being revealed as subjects for another. 'The characteristic of a dead life is that it is a life of which the Other makes himself the guardian.'[13] There is thus no room in the structure of the for-itself for a 'being-for-death'. 'Death is not an ontological structure of my being, at least inasmuch as it is for-itself.'[14] It is merely an aspect of facticity. It is something that is simply given, and something absurd. 'It is absurd that we should be born and it absurd that we should die.' As something factual, however, it remains external to the for-itself's efforts at self-fulfilment. Man must simply accept this fact for what it is, because the truth is that the 'absurdity' of death is just something added to the 'absurdity' of existence and in no way modifies its meaning. 'We always die into the bargain.'[15]

Jaspers regards death as a particularly striking example of what he calls the 'individual limit-situations'.[16] To experience limit-situations and to exist are one and the same thing, says Jaspers; and this helps us to understand what he means by this term.[17] The essential difference between limit-situations and ordinary situations is that they do not undergo any fundamental change. Situations change, but I am gradually led to realize that the fact of being in a situation of some kind is an inescapable feature of the human condition. Limit-situations thus form an inescapable part of human existence. They are like a wall with which we collide and come to grief. A limit-situation evokes a feeling of precariousness. I am isolated from my familiar world by an existential element which disturbs my matter-of-fact world. Whatever objectivity a limit-situation possesses, it has none of the simple objectivity that can be transformed into knowledge. Some limit-situations are varying, as for example is that created by my relationship to my parents. Others have a specific historic form, but reflect some general characteristic common to all men. There are the 'individual limit-situations'. As an objective fact of empirical experience, death is not yet a limit-situation. It attains this status only when I look upon it as a personal event which affects the whole meaning of my personal existence. We are first aware of the existential possibilities of death in our experience of the death of someone we love. The death of a loved one seems at first a severing of communication which leaves me completely alone. Yet, because our relationship during his lifetime was a genuine existential communication, death cannot destroy its truth. Even in death, therefore, the loved one remains an 'existential presence'. The pain one experiences at

[13] *EN.*, p. 626.
[14] *EN.*, p. 631.
[15] *EN.*, p. 633.
[16] *Philosophie*, ii, pp. 220-9.
[17] *Vide ibid.*, pp. 201 ff.

such times gives way to a 'deeper serenity' which springs from my awareness that what has been destroyed by death is only the empirical aspects of the person's existence and not his essential being. However, even a deep experience like this has not the sharpness of my own death. It is only when I realize that *I* must die that I become aware of the absolute significance of death. It is the irrevocable event which threatens to cast my empirical being into nothingness. 'The rest is silence.' Yet this silence which reveals my complete ignorance of what is to happen to me can become significant. It can become, as Jaspers puts it, 'a genuine will to non-knowledge', a frank admission that I never shall know the objective truth of this matter and that I must regard death as a challenge to be endured, a test imposed on me while still alive. Thus I shall not be an empirical existent, for ever fearful of the time when I become nothing but an Existence determined to seize this opportunity of becoming most truly itself. Death is thus a kind of touchstone for distinguishing the essential from the trivial aspects of life. It is neither friend nor foe, but an event which unites the relativity of the Dasein and the absoluteness of Existence. Genuine courage before death occurs only when we do not put our trust in some proof of immortality which would be the prolongation of some empirical aspect of the Dasein. Death is therefore not the mere cessation of life, but the fulfilment of being in the historicity of human Existence—that is, it is one of the occasions in life which can enable man to be most truly himself.

These three views of death are what humanistic existentialism has to offer us, and in conclusion I wish to make some brief evaluation of them. The three are essentially different accounts of death, whatever they may have in common. For Heidegger death has a supreme ontological significance, whereas for both Sartre and Jaspers the significance of death is something about me and not about death. Again, what Jaspers admits to be an unknown quantity, Sartre calls absurd. There are, I think, two things which need be said about these views—(*a*) that they throw light on the metaphysical puzzle of death by talking about my expectation of my own death, (*b*) that they commend certain ethical attitudes which are open to a man who faces death without any definitely religious faith. We may begin our metaphysical enquiry with Wittgenstein's remark on the *Tractatus*: 'As in death, too, the world does not change, but ceases. Death is not an event in life. Death is not lived through.'[18] One of Sartre's criticisms of Heidegger was that it was as true to say that no one can do my talking for me as it was to say that no one can do my dying for me. In this way he has, I think, hit on one of the significant points in the Existentialists' discussion of death, that by talking of my death they have revealed the non-predictive meaning of the term. 'I will die' seems at first glance to be a logical as well as a linguistic parallel with 'I will speak' or 'I will run'. Either of these two last verbs could be conjugated in every

[18] *Tractatus* vi, 431; vi, 4311.

possible tense and every possible person, so that logically 'I will speak' and 'He will speak' are parallel. But with 'I will die' this is not so. I can say 'He will die' or 'He is dying', and further 'He has died', and in all these cases the meaning of the term 'die' remains the same. If we substitute 'I' for 'He', I can only say 'I have died' in a metaphorical sense. Thus we see that there is at least one use of the word 'I' which is not exhaustible in public language, and that when we use the verb 'to die' in the first person singular it behaves peculiarly. But what is the significance of the statement 'I will die'? Understood as an ordinary empirical prediction, it says that at some undefined time in the future the physical organism which is my body will undergo certain changes so that it will cease to behave in those ways which are what we call 'living'. However, in this sense 'I will die' is parallel with 'He will die'. Now let us remind ourselves of Sartre's pregnant remarks about 'my'. It is the fact that with regard to statements about me and my body I have a privileged access which makes 'I will die' also necessarily different from 'He will die'. My body and my behaviour is not in the world for me in the same way that Smith's body and behaviour is in the world for me. My dying is for me, not merely the cessation of certain behaviour. Dying is not something I can do and report—it is not an achievement. What Heidegger and Jaspers have emphasized is thus quite true—Dying is a private affair. The implications of this is that we cannot dismiss talk about what happens after death, survival or resurrection of the body as contradictory, since what this talk contradicts is what is true of public language. Further, the very pressure we have discovered in the ordinary use of the word 'death' carries us forward to talk about what happens afterwards.

The soteriological concern of some existentialists is not divorced from their metaphysics. For Heidegger, the authentic attitude to death is to accept its full meaning by 'running forward' to meet it, since it is the supreme possibility of the Dasein. For Sartre, the authentic attitude is simply that of acceptance of the absurd. For Jaspers, the authentic attitude is the genuine will to non-knowledge, the courageous acceptance of shipwreck, since we know not what will happen and it is thus a trial of man's fidelity to himself. Of these three attitudes, perhaps it is that of Sartre which is the most consistent, though we must admit that there is an element of Stoicism in both Heidegger's and Jaspers' which is not without appeal. This Stoical courage, however, depends on their metaphysical appreciation of death. Is death the supreme possibility, 'life's high mead'? If it is in any sense a supreme possibility, it is so because of what it means to live, to be a person. And as we saw, the onward drive of language which we experience leads us on to say more. The inadequacy of these ethical commendations is that they are in the end negative. Therefore Sartre's attitude of resignation epitomizes existentialist eschatology. Since God is dead, then we must not delude ourselves that the sense life possesses

is anything other than nonsense. A theological evaluation of this eschatology must welcome its impatience with proof of immortality whilst pointing to the fact that the religious hope is that of resurrection. In a word, the contribution of existentialism is that it reminds us that in life we cannot escape the fear that our seriousness about ourselves is irrational. The difference between this humanism and religious faith is how this fear is met, and the proof of this, as of all puddings, is in the eating.

# NATURAL INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

By Leslie Paul, author of *Nature into History*

I must confess that I was considerably startled when I first received the request to address this Summer School. I was asked if I would please talk to the Conference on the physical, biological, psychological, anthropological, etc., evidences for immortality. Despite the compliment which this paid me, I had to confess to being unfitted to do it—apart altogether from the demands such encyclopaedic treatment would have made upon your time—and we compromised on the title, 'The Natural Intimations of Immortality'.

Of course, this is much better as a task. But I have straightaway to ask—are there any? As far as science is concerned, at any rate, there do not appear to be any direct proofs of immortality, and the best we can hope to do is to look at the structure of nature as a whole and to see what we can infer from it, and we have Bertrand Russell's authority for saying that to make inferences about total reality from the parts of it we experience is a perfectly proper philosophical precedure. By 'natural intimations' we mean what we can discover about immortality from what science tells us about the world, and I think this involves us to begin with in arguing something about the intentions of science.

In its origins, modern science was concerned with two things—first, to reveal God's providence in God's world, and second, to increase man's power in that world. The two aims were not irreconcilable, and certainly neither Descartes nor Newton ever thought they were. It was axiomatic both to Judaistic thinking and to Christian thinking that the whole world constituted a revelation of God's wisdom and power and providence. The Psalms and the books of the prophets are full of the poetry of the wonder of man before the glory of God as revealed in nature. Therefore neither Jew nor Christian could conceive of the world as basically hostile, evil or irrational and full of powers inimical to man into the behaviour of which it was best not to probe. The Christian man certainly could only feel that the farther he probed into the mysteries of nature, the nearer he came to the truth of God. In that very feeling, a feeling of awe and love, modern science was born, and though it may have now disclaimed its Christian origins, the sense that the world is fundamentally rational through and through and therefore that man's intellect can penetrate it and not find it alien is so *final* for science that it is problematic whether science could lose it and survive. On the other hand, we know that Genesis commands man to have authority over the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. He is to know them and name them and use them. Genesis places man *between* nature and God. It awards him the very special position of the confidant and co-creator with God, and therefore as lifted out of the nature he is to command and placed above it. The increasing acquisition

of power over nature, which scientist-philosophers like Roger Bacon and Francis Bacon saw as the principal end of science, is justified up to the hilt by the authority vested in man in Genesis. We may look upon the immense voyage of exploration of modern science as the fulfilment of the charge laid upon man by God which every Christian is aware of, and must approve.

However, what seemed to happen—if we look at science in the nineteenth century—was that the massive territory explored and revealed by science appeared to make insignificant the original intentions. The origins of the scientific impulse were lost sight of just because of the success of science in building up a new world picture. The world of nineteenth-century science was majestic and awe-inspiring. A cosmos of infinite time, boundless space and indestructible matter appeared to be revealed. It was a universe, in which neither matter nor energy could ever be lost, which existed from everlasting to everlasting. The material universe had become God. Materialism was the religion which worshipped that new God who was so much more evident and all-powerful than any elusive, unseen and transcendent God. There was no escape within the universe from the immutable Natural Laws which governed it. How could one defy any natural law? It was impossible, since everything was the product of them. It was a universe in which everything was peculiarly 'present', 'here', confronting man. It seemed absurd to conceive of anything which was not present in face of the completeness of the boundless and infinite universe. If anything was not 'here'—where was it? Laplace's dilemma, that he searched the universe with his telescope and could not find God, was a real one, not simply a wisecrack. Where could God be, if not in the universe? Where could man enjoy eternity? It was easy to conclude that there was nothing which was not *here*.

Of course there were escapes from what I might call the cannibalism of science—its tendency to swallow up the whole of reality. The first kind of escape was through the substance doctrine which the Western world (especially the scientific world) inherited from classical times. It comes down to us from Aristotle through Aquinas to Descartes, Newton and Boyle. The basis of the Newtonian universe, for example, was matter, which was finally indestructible substance, which suffered accidents or was moved by forces but remained itself unchanged from eternity to eternity. In Cartesian theory, which is the most easy to expound, the universe consisted of three elements—matter, which was extended substance, thought or mind which was unextended substance, and God. Thought was recognized as one constituent of the universe by nineteenth-century science. If thought or mind was regarded as one substance, having a different nature from material substance but the same permanency and indestructibility, then it was possible to argue that the universe was at least dualist, that an immaterial, mental universe dwelt

side by side with a material universe. It then became possible also to argue for the existence of God in the immaterial universe, and for the inevitability of immortality for man since the mental substance which was half his nature would never be destroyed. The difficulty Cartesianism had always to face was the reconciliation of these two distinct and permanent dimensions of being in the one world everyone inhabited.

There were other escapes—the Kantian escape which (I summarize roughly) makes the world a chaos of appearances over which man's mind places a frame of sense and rationality, an order of time and space. By the same token man was also placed within an area of moral freedom in which he could make the 'ought' into the 'is'. But all this had the effect of making the dimension of mind the superior reality of the universe and of reducing the natural order to that of secondary reality, i.e. reality contingent upon the mind. The manner in which English idealism embraced this view is familiar enough, but it ran counter to what science taught and what practical men believed as a matter of common experience. The most remarkable escape of all was the acceptance of Darwinian theories of evolution. In Darwinian terms evolution was not some willed process in the universe, but a mechanical process of selection. But what Darwin actually said was less important than what people came to believe. He taught them to accept evolution as a fact, and popular theorizing therefore soon came to go beyond him (as Spencer did) and to embody evolution in the universe as somehow the intention or purpose of the universe. This disposed of God in a new way, for now evolution became the God-like purpose at the heart of things, leading to a new and more perfect pattern in them. Thus the problem of where to put God in a Newtonian universe was to some extent solved by evolution: God was to be made completely immanent in the world. This is a view which evolutionary philosophers like Whitehead have expounded right up to our time.

We must conclude that the intellectual concepts of nineteenth-century science must have looked to the scientists as just as indestructible as the very world order they explained. This enables me to make the bridge to the present day and to say that it is just this very intellectual order which is the greatest casualty of our times. No one to-day, except in practical affairs, lives by the Newtonian universe. All its grand presuppositions have been dismantled one by one. There is no basic substance, no unbreakable atom, not even a law of gravity in its old form. Matter is revealed as a field of force, as pulsations of energy in forms which are only by courtesy called particles. The processes of matter can be computed and reduced to equations, but no one pretends the equations are the reality, they only record how the reality behaves. This tenuous, almost indescribable energy-basis of the material world is far from indestructible —certain particles have a brief life within it and are seen to decay. We

know quite well that when this energy-system which we describe as the material universe is fixed within the space-time relativity order, then nothing in the whole world becomes more mysterious, more difficult to grasp than the emergence to our perception of the everyday things we encounter.

This is not the end. Astronomers who accept the notion of an expanding universe (and they perhaps are the majority just now) are forced to conclude that the universe began its life at a particular point in time in the explosion of an aboriginal atom, and not unreasonably may also argue that this inrush of energy will one day exhaust itself. Logically, one may say, if the universe began at a particular point in time in this way, then equally one day it must come to the end of its time or its energy and cease to exist. Even astronomers who argue that the universe is a static order are compelled to introduce the notion of the continuous creation of matter as the source of its maintained order and continual self-transformation. It hardly seems kind to point out that the materialist to-day must strenuously uphold the immateriality of matter and the possible ephemerality of the cosmos. These are concepts which would have horrified his predecessors, for they point to a universe contingent through and through, but contingent not upon the ordering power of man's mind (Kantianism) but upon some unknown substratum of energy or some transcendent God. At least let us say that a universe contingent upon a God not present to us is no absurdity.

But man is contingent too. What Mr. J. H. Thomas, the previous speaker, explained in his able address on the existentialists is most relevant here. However, I want to support what he said from the side of the human sciences. No one to-day easily accepts the notion of mentality as substance in the old Cartesian sense. If material substance has gone, it is going to be difficult to sustain the notion of mental substances. What has replaced it? Well, no one is quite sure. But if we look at Freudian theory, with its notion of an Id which comes blindly bumping into the world, full of appetite but empty of experience, and of its transformation into Ego and Super-ego, we can, so to speak, conceive of man as an inrush of energy or appetite in the world, as something quite new and unique and individual in that sense. As though before his personal inrush *he* was not: so that he is something new and not a continuing fragment of an old substance. Jung would speak in a rather different way, of the existence of a vast lake of racial unconsciousness and of how each individual man is somehow a fountain or spring tapping that hidden source. But for both of them, human activity is much more like a Bergsonian élan let loose in the world than it is like any *thing*—a stone or a chair—put there as it is and accepting passively the modifications of time and place, wear and tear. But as we saw from what we learnt just now of the existentialists, there is just no 'reason' for my particular here and now. Not only do 'I' come unasked into the world as 'my' particular existence which I can

never exchange for anyone else's, but I shall be deprived of it in exactly the same way—that is, death will come upon me unasked, probably unwanted, certainly inescapable. In other words, human nature seems also to be contingent through and through. *But then the whole universe is contingent through and through.*

Contingent being is secondary being—it follows that it must be contingent upon other being which is primary being. In the nineteenth century it was easy to say that the infinite indestructible universe was the primary being upon which human being was contingent. Who could accept such an absurdity to-day? Both man and the universe must be supposed to be equally contingent upon a being which is not themselves, but primary being. This makes it not only respectable but necessary to speak of God again.

If we add *time* to the mixture, we see precisely how contingency takes effect. There would be no contingency if everything existed from everlasting to everlasting. The fact of time is an expression of contingency. But the fact of time is an expression of freedom also. The contingent being freely enjoys its being in time. Freedom to enjoy means freedom to change. And time and change make death necessary. As Bergson said, everything is as if death was necessary, or at least accepted, for the greater intensity of living. A universe contingent through and through exists in time and in the face of death, and this is the measure of its dependence upon a transcendent Creator. This I would argue is the conclusion to which my argument must come.

But we are not only concerned with contingency but with immortality, and I must relate what I have said (in what is really an ontological theme) to the title of the lecture. Here we must observe a striking thing. Man is aware, as no other part of the universe can be, no animal even, of his contingency. He knows that he faces the mystery of his own existence: he knows that he is not self-creating: he knows that death forecloses and that he cannot evade it. Man, as Yeats said, has invented death. The mere knowledge of this state enables him in some degree to transcend it, and we witness in man a continual effort to overcome the limitations of time and space—learning, science, language, political systems, religions witness to this—indeed in almost everything he does he seeks to overcome the limitations of space—think of radio, for example—or to survive the destructive movement of time. The voices of prophets and sages long dead come down to us as effectively as ever over the long vistas of time. Man therefore is not only contingent, but realizes non-contingency. He smells out the Deathless, the Immortal, and seeks to enter that dimension and to move in it even here on earth. This is a theme I tried to explore in *Nature into History*. It really is a strange situation that man, through and through contingent, aspires continually to realize that which is not

contingent in his own life and culture. This is surely what Jean-Paul Sartre meant when he spoke of man as aspiring to be God.

I do not think we can regard this movement of man from mortality to immortality as meaningless, as a species of self-deception. It may very well be that man as it were focuses in himself the movement of the whole of creation towards the Godhead. I am not one of those who think that the movement of creation in its element time is only a corruption of eternity and without meaning to God, who dwells in a still perfection. I believe that if creation moves in time, then time has real significance for the Creator, and if that which is beyond time has concern or care for that which is in time, then all that which moves in time finds fulfilment or finality in that which lies beyond time. The movement in time is launched at eternity. Man in his spiritual and intellectual intensity appears to stand supreme over all that exists in time and at the same time by his very nature to be called always towards that which is beyond time. One is entitled to infer that his earthly contingency is not the whole story and that his being is only fully meaningful if its trajectory moves beyond the dimension of the earthly and contingent into that of the eternal. Perhaps only if this is the case can man be considered a responsible being in relation to a Transcendent God—we can say that he will carry the burden of his responsibility with him. We must conclude that man will enjoy an existence in and with the Eternal, but nothing in science or in nature can tell us what kind of an existence that will be. We are reasonable in expecting it, or in hoping for it, but nothing that is out of time (as immortality must be) can reveal to us its precise nature in time.

# SOME ASPECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF IMMORTALITY

By Dr. W. H. C. Frend, T.D., D.Phil., F.S.A., Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and University Lecturer in Church History and Doctrine

'For God created man to be immortal and made him to be an image of his own eternity' (*Wisd.* ii, 23). Thus, an Alexandrian Jew, writing perhaps in the first century B.C., defined man's ultimate goal. Man had been made in the likeness of God, and immortality was part of that divine heritage. Through observance of Torah 'received by Moses from Sinai', and handed on to Joshua and thence to the elders and prophets and the men of the great assembly (*Pirḳe Aboth*, ed. Charles, I.I.), man would 'enter into kinship with Wisdom' (*Wisd.* ix, 12) and set himself on the way that led to blessed immortality.

For the Christian that same hope was fulfilled by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Much of St. Paul's preaching may be summed up in the words of *Acts* xvii, 18, 'Jesus and the Resurrection'. It was the Resurrection that had broken the power of death, and of the host of malevolent astral deities who, as lords of time, had governed human existence hitherto. These were the 'world rulers', and now their power was at an end. One can feel the joy of Christians in Asia Minor at the end of the first century A.D. in the words of the writer of I *Peter* i, 3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' Or again, one reads in II *Peter* i, 4, that through Jesus Christ Christians 'might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in this world through lust'. Emancipation from death and deification therefore was to be mankind's new hope through the coming of Christ. The existing natural order had been defeated by the miraculous birth and still more miraculous resurrection of Jesus.[1] The Christian Church provided the means by which the individual attained his heritage. The Eucharist was 'the bread of immortality'. God was manifest as man for 'the newness of eternal life', that we should not die but live for ever in Jesus Christ.[2] 'God,' says Irenaeus at the end of the second century, 'became visible in order that we might share his immortality' (*Adv Haereses* iv, 20.2). The Christian was destined to become divine himself.

Thus, the early Church recognized the Resurrection as both the fulfilment and supersession of existing Jewish hopes. From the Fall mankind had gradually groped his way back towards reconciliation with God, which the coming of Christ had now made possible. The question asked by the young man, and recorded in all the Synoptics (*Mḳ.* x, 17, *Lḳ.* xviii,

[1] Ignatius, *Ep. to the Ephesians*, 19-20.
[2] Ibid., 20.

18, and *Mt.* xix, 16), how eternal life was to be inherited, had been given a decisive answer in the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It is, however, no use pretending that either the question or answer have the same appeal to us to-day. The century since the publication of *The Origin of the Species* has witnessed a revolution in religious thought in which all the great religions of the world are involved. Of all Christian doctrines, that of immortality has had to meet the most serious challenge. The reasons are clear enough. The enormous casualties of two world wars have left their mark on men's appreciation of the worth of their fellows. The fact that these casualties were often caused by senseless decisions, or that sheer mischance ended valuable lives, has led reasonable people to question the very existence of God in whose image man could be created. The brute mechanical means of the destruction of human life has robbed that life of something of its sanctity. The phrase, 'No one is indispensible', has been applied to both this world and the next.

Moreover, slowly but surely the impact of the immense discoveries of physical and biological science in the last three centuries has seeped down from the educated minority to the broad masses of humanity. It is clear that, whatever clergy or priestly orders may have declared in the past, the earth is not the centre of the universe, but an inconspicuous member of a solar system somewhere near the edge of the Milky Way, one among hundreds of millions of similar systems in an ever-expanding universe. In many ways, the discoveries of Galileo caused a deeper breach with traditional theology than did the Reformation, but their full effects on men's minds have made themselves felt only in the last half-century.

It might follow from this, that even if we were not speaking in the anniversary year of Darwin's and Wallace's famous paper, that man too had been dethroned from a privileged position within the created order. It is interesting to read back how in the second century A.D. the Platonist philosopher Celsus had argued against the Jewish and Christian thesis that the world had been created for the sake of man, by urging the claim of other species to divine interest and protection (Origen, *Contra Celsum* iv, 21 and 74). Now, it would seem evident that the same tendencies towards growth, maturity and final extinction which had applied to former lords of creation in geological time, such as the dinosaurs and the mammoth, can apply to man. Man may be of more account than 'many sparrows', but his spell is limited nonetheless. And extinction, even at a comparatively remote period ahead, is not immortality, nor would it justify a claim for man to be made in the image of God.

A century ago, these ideas were the ideas of a few. Now they are commonplaces, and instead of immortality, people have accepted the substitute of the study of man himself. As Crawford wrote in his editorial in the first number of *Antiquity*, published in March 1927, 'our field is

the earth, our range in time a million years or so, our subject the human race. . . . The universal interest in the past is perfectly natural. It is the interest in life itself'. Interest in Man on earth and his future as the conqueror of space is the natural corollary to the decline of interest in an eternity beyond the heavens.

But these tendencies have not passed unchallenged. At the other end of the scale some theologians have been at pains to stress the primacy of physical death over our lives. We must be educated, we are told, with the idea of death always in front of us if we are to make proper use of our mortal lives. Death must dominate our lives from the earliest age, and if this means opposition to the national system of education, so much the worse for it, i.e. death or the system?

In the writer's view, both the materialist and the neo-Catholic concepts of man and eternity are mistaken. Eternal life does not mean to the Christian merely the prolongation of each human life even for an unknown number of millions of years. It is more than 'race memory', though it may be that the Greco-Roman world which held this idea was teaching something true and valuable. But, as William Temple pointed out, the Peace of God involves a synoptic view of history and of time which cannot be won however many years an individual may exist.[3] Eternal life must be on a different plane from human life, though again, it is reasonable to assume some form of prolongation of the moulding of the personality on earth. At the same time, over-emphasis on the physical end of human life is contrary to both Christian teaching and experience. The New Testament story does not end with the Cross and the Tomb. It is continued with the Resurrection, the Ascension and what may truly be called the new turn in human history that follows. It is, moreover, incompatible with Christ as the Lord of life, whose mission is to 'bring life and life more abundantly' to believers. We do not seek the living among the dead.

But if we wish to re-examine and re-define the Christian hope of eternal life, we must start by understanding how the pre-suppositions of that hope came into being. The divergent elements have been aptly summarized by the late Professor Quick. 'In the two great traditions of thought and experience,' he writes, 'the Hebraic and the Hellenic, which have principally influenced Christian theology, we find two quite different ways of conceiving the relation of the perfect world to this in which and from which we crave salvation. The first employs mainly the symbols of temporal relation, the second those of spatial' (*Doctrines of the Creed*, p. 238). That is to say, the Hebrew conceived salvation in terms of a world to come (i.e. in the future, at the end of a historical process), while the Greek saw

[3]Wm. Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, London, 1949, pp. 449-51.

human salvation in terms of the communion of man's immortal soul with God, without reference to time.

The contrast between these two views is fundamental, and indeed is one of the irrevocable causes of Christian confusion and division to-day. In the early Church it lay at the root of both the Trinitarian and Christological controversies. It is now thanks to Professor Oscar Cullmann in his 1955 Ingersoll Lecture on the Immortality of Man that the whole question has been brought out into the open. His *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?* (Epworth Press, 1958) is a piece of striking and courageous writing which has a direct bearing on our subject.

Cullman starts with the contrast between the view of death expressed by Plato in the *Phaedo*, and that of Christ drawn from the Synoptics. In the latter, the Markan account is of the utmost importance, not only as the earliest Gospel account, but also because Mark often reproduces Christ's moods more forcibly than do the other Gospel-writers. Thus, he describes Jesus' reactions as the threat of death advances. He begins, we are told, to tremble and be distressed (*Mk.* xiv, 33). He tells his disciples that 'my soul is troubled even to death'. He does not want them to leave him. He is afraid in the face of death itself, and this fear is echoed by another witness, the writer of *Hebrews*, who states that Jesus 'with loud cries and tears offered up prayers and supplications to him who was able to save him' (*Heb.* v, 7). In vain, and hence the despairing cry on the cross. Death, then, is the enemy of God, that last enemy, as Paul calls it in I *Cor.* xv, 25.

Now contrast, with Cullmann, the death of Socrates as told by Plato. Here we have perhaps the finest passage ever written on the subject of the immortality of the soul. The soul, says Socrates, confined within the body, belongs to the eternal world. As long as we live, it is in a prison, in a body essentially alien to itself. Death is the great liberator, leading the soul back to its eternal home, and, though Socrates will not try to prove the immortality of the soul mathematically, he leaves his listeners no doubt that he considers that it amounts to a very fair chance for man. 'Then, Cebes, beyond question,' he says, 'the soul is immortal and imperishable, and our souls will truly exist in another world.'[4] And the argument is brought to a close. His own death is beautiful, met with calm, composure and complete peace.

The point is that Jesus regarded death on the cross as total, involving body and soul. It was not the body that had to be conquered, but death itself, and hence the exultation of the first Easter, hence the greeting of 'Christ is Risen' echoed in the Eastern Church, down to the present day. The Resurrection is the starting point of the Christian Church. Man, through Christ, had been recalled to life by God. Death therefore had

[4]Phaedo (ed. and tr. Jowett, *The Dialogues of Plato*, ii.254).

lost its sting. It was swallowed up in victory (I *Cor.* xv, 44). This, as we have already seen, is the message of the primitive Church.[5]

And, just as soul and body could be cast into Gehenna (*Mt.* x, 28), so soul and body rise on the Last Day. The soul is not immortal of itself. It will be clothed with a body, a spiritual body it is true, but nonetheless a body, and the new creation at the end of the world will be a new heaven and a new earth. The resurrection of the body will form part of this (II *Pet.* iii, 13). Some passages in the Pauline epistles put this view even more strongly. Far from being a tomb, the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I *Cor.* vi, 19). Both inner and outer man are necessary for full existence. Sin, the result of the Fall, corrupts both, and the wages of sin are death (*Rom.* vii, 24). The recapitulation which Christ had brought about had been the reversal of the consequences of Adam's sin, and the restoration of the original natural order of creation, of man in the image of God. And that process had already begun through the Holy Spirit working in the Christian Church.

Here, then, are two entirely different views of mankind's ultimate hope, on the one hand, that of the New Testament, on the other, that of Plato. And, one would add, the conflict between the two lay at the heart of the Trinitarian controversies of the third and fourth centuries. For if the world of the hereafter contains demonic powers and physical dangers to body and soul, then the antidote, the 'bread of immortality' of the Eucharist must contain the essence of God himself, and hence the Son must be 'consubstantial with the Father'. Otherwise, the Eucharist would not contain the divine elements, and would be vain. But if the destiny of man is the communion of the soul with a transcendent God, then the emphasis in the Christian belief must lie on the uniqueness of God and the relative inferiority of all else apart from him, including his agent of creation, the Divine Logos. Contemplation and asceticism rather than participation in the Eucharist, becomes the chief Christian aim and virtue. Hence the difference between Origenists and Athanasians, and the isolation of Athanasius in the East outside his own loyal Egypt. But, put as starkly as Cullman has done, the revelation of these divergencies was bound to 'have been the cause of astonishment, sorrow and deep distress'.[6] For Cullman failed to put the New Testament view into its historical context, and, having established his thesis, he did not go on to tell his readers why the Hellenic view came ultimately to exercise so profound an influence on Christian thought; in other words, why the real victor in the Trinitarian

[5]It is interesting to find an almost contemporary pagan hope of the imprisonment of death connected with the Imperial cult. Statius (*Silv.* v, 1, 165–169) prays that if only Domitian were all powerful, Death would be imprisoned and mortal life prolonged.

[6]O. Cullmann, op cit., p. 5.

controversies was Basil rather than Athanasius. These are gaps which I shall now try to fill.

The turning point in the Hebrew view of immortality comes with the Maccabaean revolt. Up to then, ideas of eternal life had been confused. The emphasis had been on the collective survival of the nation in a life to come. 'For as the new heaven and the new earth which I will make, shall remain before me, with the Lord, so shall your seed and your name' (*Is.* lxvi, 22). At the same time, the souls of the dead were consigned to Sheol, the pit. There they were lifeless shades, in darkness and eternal slumber, 'whom the Lord remembered not and they are cut off from thy hand' (*Ps.* lxxxiii, 5).[7] This Hebrew view was, of course, shared by their contemporaries in Greco-Roman and Celtic worlds. The life beyond was a wraith-like copy of this present life. The shades hunted and feasted as they did here. The hunting scenes we find on classical sarcophagi, the fine amphorae and mutton chops in some of the Belgic tombs in Britain need no further comment.

The Maccabaean wars brought about a fundamental change. The decision for or against Hellenization rent Israel in twain. In the story of Maccabaean wars we are inclined to forget the large and influential class in Jerusalem who were prepared to accept Hellenization. Opposition came mainly from the Palestinian villages and countryside. There was a real choice, and to the religious divisions were added those of social and economic status as well. The dead were either martyrs or apostates, and the feud was carried beyond the grave. Thus in *Daniel* xii, 2, we have the first Biblical reference to the resurrection of the dead and their judgment at the end of time. Everlasting life is contrasted with everlasting contempt. The idea of individual salvation now takes its place alongside that of the salvation of the Jewish nation. In the next generation this idea was given further emphasis in the saga of Eleazer the priest, as told by the writer of II *Maccabees*. There Eleazer is represented as sacrificing his life as an act of atonement for the sins of Israel. Innocent himself, he dies as a vicarious sacrifice, hastening God's mercy by his death. He enters on eternal life, while he can assure his persecutors that they will not remain unpunished hereafter (II *Macc.* vii, 9-14). The creator of the world would give back to the sufferers for his name breath and life (ibid. vii, 22-23), and this implies bodily resurrection.

The doctrine which is presented is that of a limited resurrection, but one involving the whole personality, accompanied by some form of Judgment. Sheol becomes increasingly reserved for those not numbered among the saints.[8] In IV *Esdras* vii, 33-34, we reach the definite statement that

[7]Yet there was also the idea of punishment for Israel's enemies suggested in *Is.* lxvi, 24.

[8]Cf. Cyril Alington, *The Life Everlasting,* Blackwell, Oxford, 1947, p. 23.

'the day of Judgment shall be the end of this time, and the beginning of immortality to come, wherein corruption is passed away, interference is at an end, infidelity is cut off, but righteousness is grown and truth is sprung up'. In the Apocalyptic literature of the first century B.C. and first century A.D. Judgment, generally by the Messiah, is universally accepted, and the damned include all the Gentiles, as *ipso facto* idolators. The description of the 'consummation of unrighteousness' given in *Enoch* xci, 1-19, ends with the destruction of temples and idols. Fire is represented as the means of punishing the wicked condemned by God's Judgment, while those who had suffered at their hands in this life were rewarded by the sight of their punishment (cf. *Assumption of Moses*, ed. Charles, c. 10).

It would seem that under the pressure of the Roman occupation the majority of Palestinian Jews led by the Pharisees accepted the idea of resurrection and judgment.[9] They were opposed by the Sadducees on the grounds that this doctrine formed no part of the Mosaic tradition. But in the New Testament both are assumed. Jesus, coming himself from the strongly nationalist area of Galilee, accepted the Pharisaic teaching. One may point to possible links in the Synoptics with the views already expressed in the Maccabaean literature. To Mark and Luke Jesus was the ideal martyr. It has recently been shown how *Mk.* x, 45, has been inspired less by Deutero-Isaiah than by Daniel.[10] Christ gives his life as a ransom for his people. Only what Eleazer accomplished in part, Christ accomplishes absolutely. The atonement is complete. Death finally has been overthrown, and Judgment would come within measurable time. The wicked would perish. In *Luke* xii, 50, baptism is equated with the martyr's death which Jesus foresees and welcomes. Luke, indeed, leads his readers step by step on to the Passion narrative, which Lightfoot[11] has so rightly described as the story of the uniquely faithful and suffering servant of God, the martyr.

Historically, therefore, the New Testament concept of the resurrection of the body is linked with already existing Jewish views concerning the destiny of the suffering and atoning martyr of Israel, and the idea of a final Judgment, in which the enemies of Israel would be destroyed. It was born amid the clash between Hellenism and Judaism in the second century B.C., and it continued in the renewed struggle against paganism set off by the Roman occupation. We must remember that the struggle against Greco-Roman paganism occupies no less than 300 years of Jewish history, from the Maccabaean Wars to the second capture of Jerusalem

[9]For the continuity of Jewish nationalist ideals and beliefs from the Maccabaean to the Roman period, see W. R. Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots and Josephus*, New York, 1956, p. 82 ff.

[10]C. K. Barrett, 'The Background of *Mk.* x, 45', *N.T. Essays and Studies in memory of T. W. Manson*, 1959, 12.

[11]R. H. Lightfoot, *History and Interpretation in the Gospels*, 1934, 176.

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in 135 A.D. The early Church is the heir to this conflict. In the *Book of Revelation* the association of bodily resurrection and Judgment with the impact of persecution is clear beyond all doubt. The martyrs, that is those who have both witnessed to the fact of our Lord's resurrection and suffered because of their witness, cry for vengeance. The wicked are cast 'into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death' (*Rev.* xxi, 8). For the saved there is the heavenly Jerusalem. Here, too, there is nothing essentially different from what was being said by the writers of *Enoch* and IV *Esdras*.

In the history of the early Church, the Christian hope is presented in these terms, where the conflict with the Roman world is sharpest, and Hebraic influence on Christian thinking most pronounced. It is combined, as in the Synoptics, with the hope of an approaching Second Coming. Persecution in the view of the martyrs of Lyons in 177 was the precursor of the rule of Antichrist, which would in turn presage the end of the existing world (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* V.1.10).

It was in Africa, however, that these ideas took firmest root,[12] with incalculable consequences for the theology of the Latin-speaking Church. It is not always easy to remember that Latin theology begins with Carthage and not Rome. From Tertullian (*De Spectaculis*, 30) we derive a picture of the Last Day, and the Judgment of Christ similar to, but far more terrible than anything to be found in the Jewish apocalypses.

> 'But what a spectacle is already at hand—the return of the Lord, now no object of doubt, now exalted, now triumphant! What exultation will that be of the angels, what glory of the saints as they rise again! What the reign of the righteous thereafter! What a city, the New Jerusalem! Yes, and there are still to come other spectacles—that last, that eternal Day of Judgment, that Day which the Gentiles never believed would come, that Day they laughed at. when this old world and all its generations shall be consumed in one fire. How vast the spectacle that day, and how wide! What sight shall wake my wonder, what my laughter, my joy and exultation? as I see all those kings, those great kings, welcomed (we were told) in heaven, along with Jove, along with those who told of their ascent, groaning in the depths of darkness! And the magistrates who persecuted the name of Jesus, liquifying in fiercer flames than they kindled in their rage against the Christians!'

They would be judged with their bodies given back to them (tr. T. R. Glover).

And Tertullian's legacy has been a long one. The whole of the Western tradition has been affected by it.[13] Behind the Augustinian (and Cyprianic) doctrine of the Church and the Augustinian theory of Grace lay the firmly held view of the physical resurrection of the body, and of Christ's Judgment as a great assize in which the vast majority of humanity

[12]Cf. the writer's *The Donatist Church*, Oxford, 1952, pp. 115 ff.

[13]From Prudentius in his hymn of the Second Coming, *Cathemerinon* XI, 101–112, to mediaeval representations of Judgment in some of our parish churches.

would be condemned. Under these circumstances persecution in this world could be represented as an act of charity (cf. Augustine, *Letter*, 173.1). As a leader of the Catholic Church, Augustine believed that he would have to give an account on the Last Day as to why he failed to compel heretics and schismatics 'to come in' (*Letter*, 43.2). The results of failure would be disastrous for those outside the Church as well as for himself. Augustine believed that the fires of hell were real fires, and that the lost would be furnished with bodies, able, like the salamander, to live for ever in the furnace (*De Civitate Dei*, XXI, 9 and 10). The imaginations of a legal-minded celibate priesthood have since filled out the gaps in the Augustinian theory. Even Thomas Aquinas listed among the blessings of the future life the satisfaction derived by the saved in gazing on the torments of the damned.[14] As a result, the Roman Church has been saddled until to-day with a doctrine of immortality which requires the existence of hell, and further, that hell should be inhabited.

It is important for us to realize that this theory has an intelligible historical basis and is not necessarily a supernatural revelation. It is the direct reaction, first of the Jew, and then of the early Christian, to persecution. For historical reasons also, it took hold in North Africa[15] and it remains the principal legacy of the African Church to the Catholic Church as a whole. If this were the whole story of the Christian hope of immortality, there would indeed be time enough for distress; for whatever else may be true of the thereafter, there is no place for a spatial heaven and hell and a temporal Judgment whence to people them. These ideas are among the permanent casualties of the century of Darwin. They are among the great illusions of religious thought, the myth of eschatology. Much oppression could have been avoided and many valuable lives saved if the rulers of the Western Church had possessed a sense of history as well as a sense of law.

But fortunately this is not the whole story. For two straightforward historical reasons Christianity was not destined to remain purely Hebraic in outlook. One can never exaggerate the effect of the fall of Jerusalem on the destiny of the Church. At one and the same time the Church lost its centre, Jerusalem, and its contact with the material aspirations of the Jewish people, as interpreted through the Pharisees and the writers of the apocalypses. In 58 James, now at the height of his influence, could say to Paul, 'Thou seest brother how many myriad there are among the Jews that have believed' (*Acts* xxi, 20). By 90 the family of Jesus' brother Jude was regarded as of so little account as not to be worth bothering about

[14] *Summa Theologica*, viii, Suppl., Quaest. 94.3 (Paris, 1885, Vol. viii, p. 102). The joy is not due to the actual torments, but in that these are a vindication of divine justice.

[15] See the writer, 'Church and State in Latin Theology', *Modern Churchman*, N.S., Vol. ii, 1958, 178.

even by so suspicious an emperor as Domitian (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii, 20). The love of many, we are told, waxed cold (*Mt.* xxiv, 12 ff.). Akiba rather than the Christian bishop in Jerusalem was leading the revival of the Jewish people. The result was the virtual loss to Christianity of Palestine and all eastern Jewry, which still had strong connections with Jerusalem. By contrast, Christianity gradually gained the upper hand over orthodox Judaism in the Dispersion. The cities of Asia Minor with Antioch, Alexandria and Rome, all centres with large populations of Greek-speaking Jews, became from now on the main Christian centres. Greek concepts, albeit with their Jewish and Christian interpretations, became the basis for doctrinal development. The Wisdom literature and the school of Philo at Alexandria replaced the waning star of primitive Hebrew Christianity.

This process was assisted by a second factor, namely, the failure of the Second Coming to materialise in a temporal form. In the first two or three generations after the Crucifixion, Christians believed that the Parousia and Final Judgment were near, even if indefinitely so.[16] As we have seen, this required a belief in the resurrection of the body, at least in a form which could enjoy the joys of paradise or feel the pains of hell. But by A.D. 200 these ideas were on the wane in the Hellenistic East.[17] Montanism had failed outside Phrygia, and, significantly enough, North Africa. The way was open for an alternative view of the Christian hope, namely, that maintained by the Alexandrians, Clement and Origen.[18]

As so often in the history of Christian doctrine, Origen marks a turning point. By temperament he was a man of martyrdom. He never lost his boyhood urge to follow his father Leonidas to execution in the Severan persecution of 203. The Maccabaean heroes were his heroes, to be cited as the first examples of true martyrdom (*Exhortation to Martyrdom*, c. 22, written in 235-36). At the same time, he also maintained that the religious man must be a philosopher, and that the goal of the Christian life was the communion of the soul with God. Just as one penetrated the literal and moral meaning of Scripture as steps towards understanding the true spiritual meaning, so the body and mind were merely the outward coverings that prevented the soul from reaching its ultimate goal. The history of human salvation was one of gradual advance from the lower to the higher. The soul, created by a loving but immutable God, must ultimately return to God, whatever tale of apostasy, sin and error it may have committed on the way. How this was accomplished in each individual, however, depended on himself. 'God,' says Origen, 'does not give us salvation. He lays it before us. It is for us to stretch out our hands,

[16]See C. Ryder-Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of the Hereafter*, The Epworth Press, 1959, 142 ff.

[17]See M. Werner, *Formation of Christian Dogma* (E.T. 1957, p. 43 ff)

[18]See the writer's 'Church and State in Latin Theology', 173.

to do good works, to take hold on life and lay it in our soul. This life is the Christ . . . ' (*Discourse with Heracleides*, c 27). But ultimately salvation would be accomplished. The spirit could not in the last resort lose its true nature, because God's final purposes could not be foiled. Thus, gradually, a situation would come about that all would be saved. The fire of Gehenna was a purging, not a consuming blaze. Punishment was educative and not penal. Salvation was not merely a hope, but a necessity.

Thus, the whole tradition of Millenarian and apocalyptic thought was destroyed, never effectively to reappear in the East. Origen's Universalism may have been condemned in 402 for the sake of political expediency, but before that it had influenced the great teachers of the Church in Asia Minor, men such as Gregory the Wonderworker, his disciple, and the Cappadocian Fathers. Thanks to them, the hope of Christian Platonism has lightened the way of many thinking Christians from the Renaissance onwards.

If Cullmann must be granted his point (*op cit.*, p. 60) that this belief cannot be reconciled with that of the New Testament, then the whole story must also be told. The Christian must be given the facts relating to the historical background of New Testament Palestine. At the same time, the contribution made by the Greek Fathers in moulding the Christian view of immortality should not be overlooked.

The last word, however, goes to the New Testament. The Christian hope is the salvation of the whole personality in whatever form God may be pleased to clothe it. There is no reason to believe, as Origen seems to have done (*De Principiis* 1.8.1), that God made the present world and fettered soul to body as a punishment, so that only the soul would be saved. Efforts to say that he did cost the Church a century of Christological strife. For all his crimes, Cyril of Alexandria stands out as one of the theologians of the Early Church who realized the importance of thinking of Jesus Christ as a single Being, all whose acts were those of God-in-manhood. He would have disagreed with Leo as much as Nestorius, for no hybrid 'God plus man' in two natures could satisfy him. For, in his view, only through Jesus combining in unity God and man, 'could the author of sin and death be overcome'.[19]

So, too, all of us is of account. We cannot divide ourselves into 'soul' and 'not soul'. It is not possible to say where the one begins and the other ends.[20] The Christian looks to a life of a new quality for which, however, his life on earth will have been relevant. 'Except a corn of wheat die, it cannot bring forth fruit', but the corn must exist and have its own life in the first place. So may it be with ourselves.

[19]See the interesting discussion of Cyril's views in E. L. Mascall's *Via Media*, London, 1956, ch. iii.

[20]See S. H. Mellone, art. 'Immortality', in Hastings, *Dict. of Religion and Ethics*, vii, 172–179.

Here, inevitably one moves from the realm of historical fact which we have been considering to that of probabilities. The nature of eternal life cannot be revealed to us. We are bound to see 'through the glass darkly'. But certain things seem more probable than others. We have seen that the Christian hope can no longer be regarded as spatial and temporal, and we may say that the doctrines which depend on this, such as the invocation of saints or of the Virgin, are illusory. There can be no paradise for the blessed when their friends and loved ones roast in hell. So, too, reincarnation into higher and lower species, like Origen's fallen angels, is far-fetched. It may be so. It seems unlikely. So, too, does extinction, for as A. E. Taylor[21] has pointed out, the way of nature seems to be that of change, disintegration and reintegration, rather than annihilation. It is difficult to talk of absolute beginning and ending of creation. Why should the universe of atoms which form our bodies and mind be exceptional? And the same argument would apply to an inanimate, motionless state, such as implied in the passive beholding of a Beatific Vision.

If the probability of life after death in some form is granted, we, as Christians, may believe, to quote John Baillie,[22] 'that eternal life is a higher order of living, which, though we have foretasted during our earthly life, cannot be fully enjoyed by us until relieved from earthly conditions'. For this the Joannine writings are obviously relevant, for to John eternal life consisted in 'knowing God', and that to love was to live. This process could only be begun on earth. If we follow his reasoning, eternal life becomes both the source and culmination of our individual lives. It contains too the ultimate perfection of society without which no individual personality can be complete.[23] Preparation, activity and fulfilment, such seem to be the probabilities of the transition from the present to the thereafter. But just how selfhood is preserved, recognizability attained, human deserts rewarded, and ultimate perfection won are matters which will always be outside our ken, though not beyond our hopes as Christians. As the writer of I *John* said, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure' (I *Jn.* iii, 2-3). Beyond this we cannot go.

As I said earlier, the century of Darwin had confronted all the great religions of the world with a challenge. The challenge is indeed of just the same character as faced the apostles, namely, how to interpret the Person and Teaching of Jesus in terms both of contemporary culture and

[21]A. E. Taylor, *The Christian Hope of Immortality*, 1946, 31.
[22]John Baillie, *And the Life Everlasting* (6th ed., Oxford, 1950), 246.
[23]J. Baillie, op. cit., 229.

eternal spiritual truth.[24] But it is more testing, in that the intellectual and material presuppositions of the old religious order have disappeared. We see our contemporaries in Islam, Buddhism or Roman Catholicism responding to this situation each in their own way, in the first two by an appeal to nationalism and cultural unity, in the last by raising the battlements of dogma backed by organization against the influence of liberal politics and secular thought. These remedies may be good in themselves, but I do not believe they provide the final answer to the questions being asked by our generation. People become rationalists not for the fun of it, but because the Church fails to answer their questions.

We in the Anglican Communion, believing like Erasmus that new learning should not be confounded with heresy, have a harder task, for we must grapple generation after generation with the great questions of life and death, and the Christian hope of the here and the hereafter. We have sometimes faltered, as in the 1860s during the *Essays and Reviews* controversy, but never entirely failed to meet the social and intellectual challenges of our day. That is both our strength and our weakness, for most of the great issues which wrack the human mind defy a uniform solution. Regarding these, of which the Christian hope of immortality is one, our duty is clear. We can dispel illusions, and point out improbabilities. We can raise religious thought thereby from among the things which are put away as belonging to childhood, to something essential to full adult life. We can guide our fellow-Christians to think quietly and sanely, remembering that the love of God is eternal, and that through our love of Christ we may share in it even in our earthly lives.

[24]See G. V. Jones, *Christology and Myth in the New Testament*, London, 1956.

# IMMORTALITY AND PURPOSE

By the Rev. F. H. Cleobury, B.A., Ph.D.

When this subject was assigned to me, I was asked to discuss the following question: Does the innate teleology of the human mind make immortality a necessary belief? First, I must indicate what I understand by the phrase 'The innate teleology of the human mind'.

In the physical sciences, such as mechanics, physics and chemistry, we are content to explain events by pointing to earlier causes, and these causes are not regarded as consciously aiming at the production of their effects. We think of the causes as blind or aimless. But when we speak of the innate teleology of the human mind, we mean the innate tendency of human beings to demand explanations not in terms of blind past causes, but of future ends. The little child who plagues us with his continual 'Why?' usually means 'What for?' Indeed, he often says so. When he gets older he asks, 'What's the use? What end or purpose is served?' But this search for purpose does not go on in a vacuum. It is inbreathed by an equally innate desire for meaning and for beauty, and by that passion for justice which inspires even small children, when playing their games, to cry out, 'It isn't *fair*!' And so we tend to ask not merely, 'What's the *use*', but 'What's the *good*?' And we cannot set arbitrary limits to this enquiry. I believe that in the end it leads to the question, 'What good purpose is served by the existence of the human race?'

I have now to discuss whether such innate teleology demands that human beings can survive death. There are, however, those who would say that we shall be wasting our time. For even if the fundamental postulates of human thinking, when analyzed and rendered coherent and consistent, involve *belief* in immortality, this, they would say, is no evidence that we are, or can be, immortal. Human thinking is one thing; objective reality is another. To prove that we want, or even need, something is not to prove that we shall get it.

I cannot here discuss the relation of human thought to reality. It would be outside my scope, and I have done it elsewhere.[1] 'I will merely state my conviction that the objection, in its present context, is based on a false view of the relation between the human thinker and the Universe. It is based on that confusion of physical science with philosophy which inspires such a lot of loose talk about Copernicus having removed man from the centre and put him, with his puny hopes and purposes, on the outskirts of a vast Universe which is indifferent to him. Copernicus did nothing of the sort, as the great metaphysical idealists from Berkeley onwards have shown. Incidentally, their essential insight agrees beautifully with modern relativity theory and atomic physics. The upshot is that while it is certain that conscious beings exist, and that language about

[1] In *Christian Rationalism and Philosophical Analysis*, 1959.

their perceptions and emotions mirrors the objective situation in a simple and direct way, there is no reason for holding that the language of the physical sciences, including the writings of cosmologists such as Professors Lovell and Hoyle, is related to the objective situation in a simple or direct way. Impersonal scientific language does not mirror reality; it merely uses verbal symbols, the function of which is to facilitate our practical dealings with our sense-data. It has little, if any, relevance to the question of human destiny. 'The proper study of mankind is man'.

Do you remember the party game we used to play as children? Someone had to look for a hidden article, and those in the know would call out, when he got near it, 'You're getting warm!' The human mind, in its quest for the truth about the things that matter most, is getting warmest when it meditates on its own deepest needs and hopes. The self-consciousness which divides man from the brutes contains the key to reality.

So far I have considered that criticism of human teleology which arises from an undue veneration for physical science. But there is another. The Buddhist regards all desire as evil; the ideal is to cease from desire. On that view it must surely be a mistake to try to satisfy *any* desires; our human teleology must always lead us astray. But the statement that all desire, as such, is evil, is not *self-evidently* true. Nor is it the result of a strictly scientific induction. Nor can it be claimed to be essential to any metaphysical construction that is to be coherent. It would seem, then, to be merely the expression of a mood—a mood which one may well suspect to be pathological.

I have said enough to justify my insistence that in our study of life and death the implications of the fact that our thinking is essentially teleological cannot be ruled out as irrelevant. We can, therefore, come to grips with our subject without feeling that we are wasting our time. But there is one other preliminary to which we ought to give some attention. Modern analytical philosophers have very rightly insisted that statements must be shown to be significant before their truth or falsity can usefully be discussed. What do we *mean* when we talk of human personality surviving death? Now I am going to insist that not only does the innate teleology of the human mind postulate that we can survive death, but that it prescribes, in outline, a precise meaning to statements about survival—the only meaning, in fact, that is intelligible.

Let me imagine three men discussing the subject with me. The first says to me, 'You will survive the death of your body'. This I find intelligible, in a way which I shall show. The second says, 'When your body dies, that is the end of you.' This, again, has the merit of intelligibility. But the third says to me, 'You are immortal, but by this I mean that the Albert Memorial will be unaffected by the death of your body.' I naturally feel somewhat mystified, and may even be provoked into asking him to talk sense.

'But,' you will say, 'does anyone ever say anything like this about death?' The answer is that there are people who tell me that I am immortal and then hasten to add that the 'I' which is immortal is not what *I* call 'I', but some other entity which, they assure me, is my real self. And when they try to explain this real self, it seems to me that even if it existed it could with as little reason be identified with me as can the Albert Memorial.

This kind of loose thinking is characteristic in expositions of Eastern thought for Western readers. It is often said that the East has had deeper spiritual experience than the West. If this is true, it must be offset by the lesser critical capacity of the East—its weakness in the matter of analyzing experience and integrating it into a coherent philosophy. It would be absurd, of course, to set experience and reason in antithesis; experience supplies the data, but reason must operate on the data before they can yield a credible whole to a critical mind. The mystic, as such, is far too easily satisfied with metaphor and myth; logical analysis is not his strong point. We must listen to him with respect, for he may have experienced more than we have. But we have every right to be critical if he evades difficulties by using metaphors, or if his language is inconsistent with itself or with the language of other mystics.

Now the question immediately before us is this. What constitutes the identity of individual personality over a period of time? The answer has direct reference to the innate teleology of the human mind. Human individuality is characterized by an exclusive *memory* of a chronological series of experiences, the whole being dominated by implicit or explicit *purposes*. The memory, I repeat, is exclusive. I am I in virtue of experiences and memories which are private to me. I am I precisely because my present experiences and my memories of past ones *exclude* the private experiences and memories of other people. I am shut out from theirs and they are shut out from mine. And integrated with the memories are the purposes. We remember so that we can profit from the past in pursuing our purposes into the future. And because your memories and present experiences are different from mine, our purposes, although they may be similar, are distinct and individual. You and I may be—certainly ought to be—living for the glory of God, but you are seeking to promote it, say, in Devonshire, I in Hertfordshire. A person, then, is a totality of *particular* memories and purposes; the memories are of a single chronological series, and the purposes, to a greater or less degree, form a unity. Ideally, as Plato held, the good life exhibits complete unity of purpose.

Now, the first form of what I am here calling the Albert Memorial fallacy arises in the minds of people who have never faced this question of the nature of individual personal identity and who are, therefore, misled by loose thinking about the relation of a substance to its attributes. If, when I say that a lump of sugar is white, hard and cubical, I think I am

talking about four entities—whiteness, hardness and cubicity, which are attributes, and a fourth entity, the substance, which, as it were, underlies and supports the three attribute-entities, then I am being muddle-headed. To talk about the substance of the sugar is not to talk about a fourth entity; it is to talk about the entity which is the concrete unity of the three abstractions. The material substance does not exist apart from its attributes —its nature—and the attributes cannot exist apart from the substance. Similarly with the human person. When we say that a person has sensations and memories and purposes, it is absurd to think that there exists a soul-substance which is a fourth entity, distinct from the other three kinds of entity—the sensations, the memories and the purposes. A person *is* a memory-purpose unity.

The false notion that a substance exists independently of its attributes leads quite logically to the notion that the substance can be taken away and a new substance inserted, leaving the attributes unchanged. This has been the alleged explanation, to which Protestants object, of the real presence of our Lord in the consecrated elements. But equally this false notion leads to the idea that the substance could remain identical even though all the attributes changed, so that we could say, 'This piece of salt is really that lump of sugar which you saw a few moments ago; the attributes are quite different but the substance is the same.' But does anyone, in fact, say this? Yes. The notion of reincarnation, at any rate in its popular form, amounts to precisely this. A person is alleged to be the same person as one who lived long ago with different particular experiences, memories and purposes.

For example, in his book *Nurslings of Immortality*, Dr. Raynor C. Johnson speaks of the possibility of the souls of human beings manifesting on earth in physical bodies more than once. He makes a distinction between the personality and the soul, and tells us that the soul remains identical but that the personalities which it manifests may be different. He seems to be using the word 'personality' for what I have called the particular memory-purpose unity, and to be using the word 'soul' to indicate some sort of soul-substance which underlies and connects distinct memory-purpose chains belonging to different periods of history.

Now I see no reason to believe that any *such* soul-substance exists. If we are to use the word 'soul', it should be for the unity of the memory-purpose chain—the unity of the individual life—not for some alleged entity so separate from the individual life that it can connect *different* lives. But what is more to the point here, even if some such entity existed, underlying as it were my self-conscious experience, it would no more be *me* than is the Albert Memorial, and it could not, therefore, be the basis identity between me and, say, Nero. If you tell me that I may have been Nero, it is sufficient to reply that I don't remember being Nero and refuse to accept responsibility for his sins. If my sorrows are punishments for

his sins, I think this unjust, and far from having any redemptive effect on me, it will make me rebellious. And if you tell me that I shall survive the death of my body, but that you merely mean that my soul-substance will survive, but that there will be no memories of my earthly life as seen, so to speak, from my private point of view, then I must ask what, in effect, is the difference between what you are saying and what the materialist is saying when he tells me that I shall be exterminated? To say 'I shall exist but shall not remember my earthly life, shall not be conscious of what I now call "myself" ', is as self-contradictory as it would be to say, 'The triangle will continue to exist but will have no corners.'[2]

There have been people who have claimed to remember past lives, but they seem to have had little notion of the kind and amount of evidence necessary to establish such a claim. The late J. Arthur Hill, in his little book on Spiritualism,[3] tells of a lady correspondent of his who claimed with absolute assurance to have been St. Peter. But at the same time he was getting automatic script from a medium in which the control, operating from what spiritualists call 'the other side', made precisely the same claim. Clearly there can be neither proof nor disproof that someone is St. Peter, for there are no details of St. Peter's life extant except those available to everyone. It is significant that cases of children 'remembering' past lives seem to be commoner in lands where reincarnation is taught than elsewhere. (The psychological explanation is probably similar to that of the fact that Christian children brought up in evangelical homes tend quite sincerely to experience conversion more commonly than children brought up in Catholic households.)

But before I leave my criticism of the notion of soul-substance, I must consider a possible objection. 'It is all very well,' someone may say, 'for you to insist that identity of personality is guaranteed by identity of purpose and by conscious memory. But consciousness is not continuous. It has gaps, as when we are asleep or are knocked unconscious. How can there be continuity unless there is some changeless substratum separate from consciousness and, as it were, underlying it?' The answer is simple. In statements of popular theism we say that finite entities not only needed God to create them, but need him to *sustain* them—to keep them in being. But a more critical theism does not regard the distinction between creating and sustaining as absolute. It prefers to say, 'Because God, who transcends time, exists, I, a creature of time, exist.' From this standpoint the discontinuous series of mental events which constitutes the life of a human

[2]There is reason to think that many, and perhaps in principle all, of our forgotten experiences are capable of being remembered. It has, indeed, been suggested (by Bergson among others) that the function of the brain is to *exclude* from consciousness past experiences on which we do not need at the moment to draw. In that case the whole of our past life would be accessible to memory at death.

[3]*The People's Books*. T. C. and E. C. Jack, page 90.

being need not be thought to have a *finite* connecting link, a *finite* substance. The connecting reality can well be God himself, in whom we live and move and have our being. Even if you introduce a finite substance, you still need to bring in God to sustain it. Your finite substance has no function that we can know.

Perhaps another objector may say, 'Why should not *the physical body* be the continuous entity underlying the discontinuous mental life of an individual?' I have only time to say that for philosophy the notion that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile is, like Marley, as dead as a door-nail!

Another form of the Albert Memorial fallacy is seen in the notion of immortality which we find running through ancient Greek philosophy. This was a curious mixture of myth and snobbery. It was myth in so far as the human mind was pictured as made up of parts—here a bit of immortal spirituality containing timeless abstractions, and there a bit of mortal sensuousness consisting of particular mental events participating in the flux of time. It was snobbery in that abstractions were held to be superior to particulars, since only the best people felt at home with them. The trouble with this view is that even if it made sense, which it doesn't, to talk about some timeless principle in a man which can survive when his particular memories and purposes cease to function, such a survival would be no more *his* survival than is the survival of the Albert Memorial.

For another example of the Albert Memorial fallacy—the fallacy of the alleged 'real self', I will turn to a book by Kenneth Walker entitled *So Great a Mystery*. Here the alleged 'real self' is not a substance underlying the self-conscious unity of memory and purpose. Not that he rules out such a substance, for he says that if the doctrine of reincarnation is true, his ordinary everyday self will have its fling in some more reincarnations, and, as we have seen, the reincarnation theory does seem to demand something like an underlying soul-substance. But none of these reincarnated everyday selves, he tells us, is the real self. He tells us that his real Self extends far beyond the consciousness of his very limited ego. It is what the Vedantist calls 'that Enduring and Immutable Consciousness'. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes it as 'Indivisible, but as if divided into beings.' This seems to be saying that the real Self of each of us is a universal Soul which includes us all. But Mr. Walker also uses language which suggests the Greek notion, which I have criticized, that there is some *part* of me which is superior to my everyday self-conscious personality. For he goes on to refer to 'something in me which is of an entirely different nature to my personality and my body, and which belongs to a different level of being'. It would surely be difficult to find language which more clearly indicated something *which is not me at all*. Actually, he takes a very poor view of his personality, and sees nothing to regret in the notion that it will have to part from his alleged 'real Self'. He sees no reason to believe

that what he calls the 'odd assortment of habits, traits, quirks and idiosyncrasies' which constitute his personality—the features by which his friends recognize him—should be accorded the privilege of continuing to live.

Now I cannot see the slightest *practical* difference between Mr. Walker's utterances on the subject and those of the crudest materialist. For it is only my alleged 'real Self' that is to survive the death of my body. And what is this 'real Self'? Well, I can take my choice. On the one hand he tells me that it is 'of an entirely different nature to my personality and my body, and belongs to a different level of being'. But if something is of an entirely different nature from me, how can it *be* me? I and my nature are not two separable entities. On the other hand, he tells me that my 'real Self' is a universal something which includes me and other people. But how can an all-inclusive something be me, since I am defined by what I *exclude*? On either view, Mr. Walker's 'real Self' is the Albert Memorial.

According to R. C. Zaehner's book, *At Sundry Times*, a rather similar division of a person into separate entities is found in the Samkhya system and in the psychologist Jung. The self is conceived as distinct from the ego. The aim of Jung's psychological method is to enable the self to displace the ego as the directing principle of the total psyche, and thus achieve integration, whereas the aim of the Samkhya-Yoga is to divorce for ever the immortal self from all the spatio-temporal elements in the psyche.

Zaehner tells us that in both the Samkhya system and in Jung, the self is experienced as immortal; this is regarded in these systems as a psychological fact, not something to be taken on trust from religion or metaphysics; it is something that can be experienced here and now. It is, he says, the goal of the Yoga technique. I must confess that I cannot attach the slightest meaning to talk about experiencing immortality here and now by cutting loose from spatio-temporal elements. I can, of course, have experiences here and now which provide *data* for a *rational* expectation that I shall survive death. But to say that I can have an *immediate and direct* present experience of future survival seems nonsense. If you reply that the experience of immortality is an experience of timelessness, I can only say that your statement conveys nothing to me; it merely reminds me of the remark attributed to Dr. Johnson about the German mystic Boehme—'Sir, if Jacob saw the unutterable, he should not have attempted to utter it!' As a matter of rational theology or metaphysics, I am bound to assert that *God's* awareness must somehow transcend the time-experiences to which we finite beings are restricted, but the notion that a finite being can participate at some moment or period of time in an awareness of timelessness must be taken with several grains of salt. It is not for me to question people's statements that they have had wonderful

experiences. But it *is* open to me to criticize the metaphysical assumptions which their verbal accounts of their experiences betray. Indeed, I would go farther. I am sure that not merely the verbal *interpretation* of the mystical experience, but the very *content* of the experience, is influenced by the uncritical metaphysical beliefs which every child derives from his environment.

The idea that there are inside me two different entities—an immortal self and a mortal ego—strikes me as naïve in the extreme. As a philosopher, I am very suspicious of nouns. The mere fact that we find it convenient to coin nouns when trying to describe an experience does not justify the belief that a separate entity exists corresponding to each of them. Nouns are often mere linguistic devices. Some of the worst offenders in this respect are the psychologists—the Freudians with their ids and super-egos and censors, and, of course, *the* Unconscious, and Jung with his contrast between the ego and an alleged timeless self which existed before his birth. If you tell me that Bill Jones's self is now replacing his ego as the directing principle of his psyche, what you really mean is that Bill at one time wanted certain things and now he wants different things. Bill is a unity, not a menagerie.

I make no apology for criticizing at some length conceptions of survival of death which do not accord with the demands of our innate human teleology. I do not believe that there is a logical half-way house between the Christian belief that the whole personality, including a re-created body, can survive death, and the materialist's belief that when the body dies the person is exterminated. The Christian belief is that it is precisely that unity of particular memories and purposes, that every-day self-conscious individual with his odd assortment of habits, traits, quirks and idiosyncrasies which Mr. Walker so despises, that is of infinite value. If that is not valuable, what is? It was to save such an individual that the shepherd left the ninety and nine in the wilderness. There is such a lot of loose thinking on the point. I recently came across an example in the little book by J. Arthur Hill to which I have referred. He said that personal survival is unimportant so long as we obtain salvation through Faith that some higher purpose is being achieved. Now I can understand a man regarding his own survival as unimportant. If he has found no experience in life worth prolonging, he naturally won't wish to survive. But why, in that case, talk about salvation? If I am going to be snuffed out soon, it is surely my *salvation* that is unimportant. He went on to say that personal survival is a temporary crutch until we reach the mountain-top and see the wider vision. This all sounds very nice, but I feel bound to ask how, if I cease to be, I can see a wider vision. Or do I, like Moses, catch a momentary glimpse of the happy land I shall never enter? A queer sort of salvation, that!

One of the great differences between the Christian faith and certain

Eastern religions is that Christianity values human individuality and *wants* its survival, whereas the latter dislike or even despise human individuality and *fear* its survival. The Christian believes that individual self-consciousness raises us above the animals and links us to God. The depreciation of self-awareness is based on a confusion between self-awareness and selfishness. There are references in Buddhist literature to the thought 'I am' as essentially proud and evil. This is a mistake. On the contrary, the higher virtues are possible only to acutely self-conscious beings. One cannot even be humble, cannot even be intelligently unselfish, unless one is keenly aware of oneself.

It should now be clear that if our innate teleology demands survival of death, nothing less than the survival of complete individual personality is involved. *The unity of memory and purpose must bridge the gulf of death.* Earthly life must be remembered, and be seen to have been a preparation for the new life. Our worthiest purposes must continue to operate, and this entails that when we no longer see through a glass darkly, when prophecies shall fail and faith shall become sight, nevertheless love must abide. The hereafter must be a society. If human love-relationships are necessarily terminated by physical death, then St. Paul was merely indulging in rhetoric when he said that love never faileth.

When we feel the force of the teleological argument for survival—which after all is the religious and moral argument—we can dismiss as unimportant the question, 'How do the dead rise and with what body do they come?' I believe the Hebrews were right, as against the Greeks, in insisting that finite consciousness must be embodied, and that St. Paul's doctrine of the spiritual body is sound; but we needn't bother our heads about the *modus operandi* of survival. God created us once; he can recreate us, with the memories that constitute identity.

And so I come to our final question. Does the innate teleology of the human mind demand survival? We could, of course, try to settle the matter by taking a Gallup Poll. But the result would not be interesting or important. A person's deepest needs do not necessarily lie open to his own gaze, and no psychologist would take at their face value the answers to questionnaires about them. A more fruitful method will be to ask whether a denial of survival of death introduces an element of disharmony and frustration into human teleology. I believe the answer to be 'Yes', and this in spite of the fact that the majority of people may not diagnose their case thus. I believe that if we cannot survive death, we have to face the fact that the major human purposes are doomed to defeat because they conflict with the nature of things. That would be a tragic state of affairs, but that is not my point at the moment. My point is that if we admit an essential conflict between human nature and the nature of things, we are faced with an acute *intellectual* problem. For man is organic to nature; he is an *expression* of the nature of things; he is part of the scheme of things.

I shall now show that if we will honestly face the facts and rigorously draw out their implications, we shall see that the denial of a hereafter leaves us with a view of life as both futile and evil. The majority of people do not see this because they are not given to facing unpleasant facts and rigorously drawing out implications. Their innate teleology has been stifled by the world, the flesh and the devil.

The first point I wish to make is that the denial of immortality frustrates moral purpose. Take the case of an intelligent juvenile delinquent who regards society's past efforts morally to condition his reflexes as having been merely an attempt on society's part to get him to subordinate his interests to society's interests. Now if that is all that morality is, he will naturally ask why *should* he thus subordinate his interests, and if that is all that morality is I just don't know the answer. It's no use telling him that for our earthly lives morality is enlightened self-interest and that virtue is its own reward. For this is plainly false. The fact is, it's no use offering him good advice; what he needs is good news. He has got to believe that in the long run it will be better for him if he is good.

'But surely,' someone will say, 'you are not going to offer heaven as a bribe to virtue?' You appear to be shocked; but it is, surely, far more shocking to think of the scheme of things as so utterly indifferent to moral distinctions as to exterminate good and bad alike. The postulate that we can survive death is needed, not indeed to be the conscious motive of every moral choice, but in order to vindicate the moral reasonableness of the scheme of things. I do not think we can so lightly wave aside the notion of reward in heaven as some superior people wish to. We have to make an important distinction in this matter of the reward of the good life. Let me give an illustration.

On the one hand, I may say to a schoolboy, 'If you work hard so as to pass your music examination, I will take you to the circus.' This is a bribe. But on the other hand, I may say, 'Work hard at your music, and you will then get so keen that the reward you will value most will be a scholarship to the Royal College of Music.' This is *not* a bribe. Indeed, no one that hadn't been thrilled by music would want to enter the Royal College. Now, according to the Christian conception, going to heaven is much more like going to a Royal College than going to a circus. The reward of leading a good life is first to want, and second to be able, to go on to lead a better one. To offer this is not to offer a bribe. Indeed, without it moral exhortations do not make sense.

Another fundamental purpose is the quest for deeper and richer experience. Theists interpret this as the quest for God. We should not, of course, be seeking such experience unless in small measure we had already discovered it. It takes many forms, but in all there is a curious blending of joy and longing. In C. S. Lewis's book, *Surprised by Joy,* he tells of early experiences in which he found himself desiring 'with almost sickening

intensity something never to be described', and then found himself falling out of the desire and wishing himself back in it. For this unsatisfied desire is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction. Since the desire is unsatisfied, it has kinship with sorrow, and yet no one who has tasted it would exchange it for all the pleasures of the world. When I read that passage, I knew what Dr. Lewis meant.

Now such experiences are crucial for our interpretation of human life. Are they the momentary opening of the prison door, yielding a passing glimpse of a glorious yet real world outside, into which physical death can release us? Or has no door been opened; are the experiences merely paintings on the inside of the prison wall—done by myself, in a moment of fantasy? The innate teleology of millions of souls has conceived of the first—the glorious—interpretation. If they are deluded, if death is the end, then we must accept the second interpretation. In that case the scheme of things is utterly cynical; it has prompted men to conceive of life as gloriously significant, while it mocks them and frustrates the hopes it has itself implanted. If men come to believe *that*, they will surely tend to regard the study of religion as merely the study of illusion—a matter for the mental pathologist; or they may be content to say that the religious man is a super-ape who has come over all sentimental.

Another conviction essential to a high moral purpose is that of the importance of the individual. Indeed, all morality turns on that. But the reflective mind must surely ask itself whether it is reasonable to set a higher value upon the individual than is set by whatever gods or forces rule the world. If we deny individual survival, the fact must be faced that the Universe kills off good men and bad men alike, as it kills off flies; it cares nothing for moral values, and contemptuously rejects the individual's idea that he matters. We can, of course, shake our fists at reality and say, 'I *will* value men even if you don't!' Or we can say, 'Let us treat our fellows *as though* they were important.' But is defiance or pretence a sound basis for morality? Are men likely, if that view of life becomes universal, to have the heart to project into reality a morality which has no roots *in* morality?

'But,' you may say, 'it is not a question of pretending or defying. We can freely create worthy ends to govern our conduct and give life purpose. Can we not make life significant by dedicating it to the service of others—even of generations yet unborn?' Well, you can try. But your rational faculties will have to wear blinkers. Otherwise you will find yourself saying to yourself, 'Here am I, of no value in the scheme of things, trying to give myself a value as a means to some end greater than myself. But what is this greater end? Merely others like me—of no more value than I am. It doesn't make sense.'

One conclusion is clear. If man is but a super-ape, necessarily exter-

minated when his body dies, then the totalitarian ruler who treats individuals as pawns in his game is at least being realistic.

We seem to be approaching a very fundamental question. Those of you who have read *1066 and All That* will remember that the authors had a way of commenting, 'That was a Good Thing'. Now human evolution is a process in which blind obedience to instinct and impulse tends to be replaced by a rational *criticism* of instincts and impulses—a process which had been applied, for example, to taboos about sex. It is inevitable, particularly as leisure increases, that the instinct for self-preservation, in individuals and in the race, will come up for scrutiny. Men will seriously ask, 'Is the human race a Good Thing?' We haven't quite got to that stage yet; indeed, I can think of one well-known philosopher who has told us that human life is so horrible that there cannot possibly be a good God, and yet who is getting worried lest this horrible thing should be exterminated by nuclear warfare. There seems an element of inconsistency. But although the logical mills grind slowly, they do grind, and sooner or later men will face the fact that if the scheme of things is as futile and non-moral as a denial of immortality implies, then, if we still try to cling precariously to the notion of duty, our duty may well be not to *prolong,* but to *exterminate,* the race. What moral right have we to secure a happy earthly existence for some by perpetuating unhappiness for others? What guarantee is there that folly and evil will not continue to dominate the human scene indefinitely?

One of the acutest minds of the Victorian age, a Cambridge philosopher who was honest enough to forego academic preferment rather than subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles, pondered deeply on the question of human survival of death. Professor Broad referred to this great man's conclusions in the following words[4]:

> 'It seemed to Sidgwick, and it seems to me, that unless some men survive the death of their bodies, the life of the individual and of the human race is
>
> "a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing".'

Dr. Broad adds that survival is a necessary condition if the life of humanity is to be more than a second-rate farce.

But I must not end on this gloomy note. My argument is really what we used to call, in the days when we did Euclid, a *reductio ad absurdum.* We proved a proposition by denying it and then rigorously drawing out the implications of our denial. When we found these impossible, we were forced to admit the truth of our original proposition. I have tried to show what is logically involved in the denial of the faith that we can survive death. If we cannot accept the implications of the denial, we cannot persist in the denial itself.

[4] *Religion, Philosophy and Psychical Research,* p. 114.

# ESCHATOLOGY AND ITS VALIDITY TO-DAY

By the Rev. C. O. Rhodes, M.A.

In the different phases of the Church's experience there has been a tendency for particular words or texts to assume rapidly an overwhelming significance. These words or texts have become slogans symbolizing such aspects of the Christian message as were of peculiar importance in the contemporary situation. They were far more than passing theological fashions.

Throughout the Reformation period, for instance, the word 'faith' dominated. Its mere enunciation was a protest against artificiality and externalism in religion. But it had a more positive function than that. It acted as a catalyst pulling together all aspects of theological thinking. It united university and village in a campaign of creativeness.

To a lesser degree the term 'Kingdom of God' was a rallying cry for many of us, earlier in our lives. This, we believed, summed up the answer of the Church to the misery and the corruption of industrial society. We must work for the inauguration of a perfect community in which all tears should be wiped away. About the same time, the words from Christ's great prayer in the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, 'that they all may be one', became the banner of the ecumenical movement. These words occupied our mental vision as if written over the sky in letters of flame. Their power was such that the momentum they started may never entirely die away.

More recently the word 'eschatology' began to capture some of the magic. For good or ill it was unlikely ever to assume the same popularity as the other for several reasons, but partly because it is itself a word of thoroughly poor quality, quite apart from its meaning. It is a clumsy and ill-sounding word and one that does not carry its meaning without explanation. In a sermon or a tract it is out of place, and is understood only by the trained person. Its only advantage is that its multiplicity of syllables and its esoteric tang enable initiates to roll it impressively through their discourses.

Yet we could do with a good portmanteau word to include all that is subsumed under it. Much of what has traditionally been the Christian hope travels under this umbrella. The expectation of the end of the present age and the ultimate rule of righteousness, the promise of heaven and the fear of hell, judgment and vindication, all these are part of eschatology. It deals with the destination of the individual and the interpretation of human history.

But it differs from the term 'Kingdom of God' as employed in former enthusiasms in being almost exclusively supernatural in its emphasis. In the old days when we sang hymns, said prayers and listened to exhortations about the Kingdom, we thought in terms of the ethical demand

upon us. The Kingdom was a state of affairs for which we had to work and plan and which, with the assistance of the divine grace, we should progressively bring into existence. With Christ as our Prime Minister, we were going to reorganize society. The term had something of a Socialist overtone. Many who had it frequently upon their lips supported the Labour Party. This kind of Christian idealism was the counterpart of the secularist doctrine of progress and was, in a sense, our answer to such people as H. G. Wells and the Fabians.

But with the entry of the word 'eschatology', all this changed. The emphasis was on the divine initiative and intention. There was more talk of human impotence and the inexorability of the divine will than of ethical demand. Those who instinctively reacted to this demand had to find new apologias while, among the more extreme elements, the whole compassionate enterprise of social reconstruction was derided as self-defeating. We looked forward now to the time when human folly and sin had brought human striving to final stultification and the divine intervention dragged miraculous victory out of inevitable tragedy. History was still as important as ever; but it was the tragic element in history and its contradiction of the divine that occupied the forefront. So far as the individual was concerned, his fulfilment also lay through judgment in the life everlasting. In fact, both collectively and personally, the purposes of history lay beyond history and not within it.

At one time, this line of thinking was recommended to us as the Christian answer to Marxism. The seductiveness of Marxism for the masses of the people, it was claimed, lay in the certainties of its philosophy of history. The strength of the Communist was to know that he was on the winning side. History was his great ally. The dialectic of social development would grind inexorably to his goal. He could look forward to the perfect society of his dreams without a flicker of doubt. If, in the great struggle for the soul of mankind, Christianity were to have a sporting chance, it must be able to offer at least as good a promise for the future. It must answer the Marxist interpretation of history with its own.

Whether the highly abstruse theory of dialectical materialism is in fact the magnet it has been made out to be is seriously open to question. Apart from the intellectuals, there are probably few Communists who know what it means. Study of the reasons why particular men and women have actually joined the party and why some groups respond to it more readily than others suggest the contrary. We know, for instance, that the snug collectivism of the party and of the system exercise a strong appeal to those whose working lives are subject to uncertainty and insecurity. We know also that the quality of being a movement of have-nots against the haves draws many to its ranks. The underdog feels that in the Communist Party he has an effective friend, that Marxism is his

creed and that its leaders are on his side. Despite many professions and an enormous volume of warm-hearted generosity, Christians are seldom able to persuade him that they are still better friends. The Christian bothers him about his soul and his morals, which he is apt to think are not as black as they are painted. Both here and abroad, it would probably be found that the factors winning recruits for Communism are very simple and human and scarcely at all intellectual.

Those considerations aside, there is this gulf of difference between dialectical materialism and Christian eschatology: the Marxist doctrine arises out of direct observation and analysis of the realities of human affairs. We may think the observation is distorted and the analysis imprecise, but when the Marxist addresses his audience he does so in terms of factors that are common to all his hearers and conditions that they all imagine they can see for themselves. He offers them immediate solutions to immediate physical problems. He points out to them a clearly visible antagonist against whom they can act. Against this the Christian offers an eschatology with no observable basis and grounded only in vague promises more or less arbitrarily selected from an ancient volume, whose reliability has again and again been torn to shreds by the Christian critics themselves, and whose claims to authenticity as a divine revelation have no warrant outside its own pages. Dialectical materialism the audience are asked to see for themselves: eschatology they are asked to take on trust.

What is worse, dialectical materialism is capable of fulfilment within foreseeable time. The kind of society it promises is not only intellectually conceivable, but already available to the imagination. No aspect of eschatology satisfies these desiderata. According to the prognostications of scientists, this earth is likely to remain humanly habitable for a million million years. According to eschatology, we may have to wait several hundred thousand millions of them before the final dénouement and the reign of righteousness. For all that period 'the struggle nought availeth', and suffering mankind are expected to continue baring their breasts to the fiery darts of evil. Why can we not be honest and acknowledge that in that sense eschatology has deteriorated into a mathematical symbol without any personal meaning or significance whatsoever? The best we can do is to reduce it to a blind faith that, in the good providence of God, the strivings and sufferings of mankind will not be in vain when the long perspectives of eternity are unrolled. But that will hardly answer satisfactorily any secular creed.

Take the other side of eschatology, the offer of heaven and the threat of hell. Nowadays hell is a little awkward. It is quietly relegated to the background and not allowed to obtrude itself on our sophistication. Generally speaking, Christian people are apt to be ashamed of hell in the twentieth century. It seems so primitive and barbarous. Unfortunately

we cannot rid ourselves of it. However quiet we are about it, still somehow this skeleton from our past lurks furtively in the shadows. It is snugly entwined in our creeds and dogmas, and the institutions of the Christian religion seem unable to break through the chains of its traditions. To spare the blushes of the orthodox, let us think about a more pleasant subject—heaven.

As an answer to a creed such as dialectical materialism, heaven itself is not really very promising. The Marxists are in fact able to dismiss it with a sneer. We ourselves cannot do much with it. Once again we have an empty sign, conveying nothing to the imagination and totally inconceivable to the mind. A psyche wholly confined to the categories of time and space cannot be expected to grasp what by definition is not subject to these categories. The mere use of the term 'life everlasting' to describe what cannot have duration as we understand it is evidence of the confusion. 'Heaven' itself is in danger of degenerating into a word denoting an imagination from the past, but devoid of contemporary meaning. The people for whose souls we are supposed to be competing with dialectical materialism are not unaware of this. To the spiritually starved peoples of the West and the physically under-nourished populations of the East we offer the inconceivable and the unimaginable. It is not a business proposition. Eschatology looks like emerging badly from the contest.

It is highly doubtful, in any case, whether the policy-makers of the spiritual realm are wise in seeking to oppose rival ideologies point by point in this way. To do so means that we virtually allow our antagonists to dictate our own spiritual and theological development. They are going about their task in the wrong way. These rival ideologies should be useful to us as an indication of contemporary human need. It must be presumed that they are expressions of that need and that, if we trace them to their origins, we shall learn something important about the human predicament. But what we should have in the forefront is not the expression, but the need itself. This we ought to satisfy in our own, characteristic manner, without trying to provide parallels and direct alternatives. To be sure, eschatology has assumed its present importance in the eyes of theologians and preachers very largely as a response to the supposed needs of the present time. What has been said so far is at least an indication of how inadequate a response it is likely to be.

Disillusion is the condition to which eschatology is supposed to supply the medicament. When H. G. Wells, at the close of the war and of his life, wrote his pathetic little work, *Mind at the End of its Tether*, he marked the collapse of an era. There had been a greatness and a nobility about the progressivism that fizzled out in Mr. Wells' despair. It had nothing selfish about it. The effort that, in spite of constant disappointment, was sacrificed on behalf of such institutions as the League of Nations in the conviction that they were the stepping stones to human

happiness expected fruition only in an unseen posterity. In many instances it did not expect for itself even the great 'well-done' at the end of life. Yet the crusading zeal it inspired touched the eyes of millions with vision. We may ultimately see a new kind of progressivism replace it when men and women of statesmanship will plan the future with that knowledge of the risk that comes with the discarding of the illusion of inevitability. In the meanwhile, over large areas of society, the absence of saving illusions is the dominant experience. The widespread cynicism is reflected in literature, of course. It also manifests itself in every industrialized nation in the world in social phenomena such as the Beat Generation, Teddy-boyism, and the like.

Whereas secular philosophers express this mood in various forms of nihilism, theologians have fallen back upon eschatology. Original sin is their diagnosis and eschatology their prescription. It is a little too facile. We are justified in asking of them at what point their system touches the realities of life and what criteria of truth they expect us to apply to their speculations. The sad fact is that even the congregations in the churches leave the prescription on the shelf. It does not seem to work any more. According to careful questionnaires and surveys, about a quarter of regular attenders in our churches do not, for instance, accept the doctrine of human immortality. They like going to church provided they are not expected to believe its creed.

Does anybody nowadays really believe in this and the teachings associated with it in anything like the same manner as our forebears did? Some time ago in a London restaurant I fell into casual conversation with an enthusiastic Roman Catholic working-class woman of middle age and with a family. She was telling me how she had recently succeeded in achieving the conversion of her husband: and if he had had to put up for twenty years with what I had to stand for twenty minutes, it is hardly surprising that he caved in at the last. To escape without rudeness, I pulled her leg. 'It's no use trying to convert an old atheist like me,' I said, 'not at my age. Besides, I have plenty of fun, why should I bother with religion.' That was my mistake. 'So,' says she, eyes agleam, 'all you think of is fun now, and never a thought for the everlasting fires waiting for unbelievers when you die. You'll face them some day.' Incongruous as the words were from a nice and friendly sort of woman, with the broadest of smiles I pretended to be taken aback. 'What!' I said in an assumed tone of shocked surprise, 'I thought yours was a nice God, who loved people. Surely you don't really think he would send a fellow like me to hell. Not me: never!' She looked hard at me. 'You!' The enthusiastic eyes wavered a little and gradually the gleam died out of them as the glow dies out of a burning coal. 'Well, perhaps not *you*.' she said, and then with a touch of defiance as if she were challenging appearances, 'But the Church says so, and the Church knows.' When presented

with actualities, her eschatology was not even a superstition. Certainly it was not a rooted conviction spreading through her whole being. It was no more than the echo of an institution that is itself an echo of the past. Am I wrong in regarding this as typical?

In mediaeval times that woman would have stood back from me in genuine horror and the flames would not have awaited the death of my body: they would have hastened it by many years. In those days strong and sane men set up their cells and their monasteries in deserts and forests where the devils had their dwellings so that they could fight them on their own ground in the name of the Lord. They provided special doors in their churches for the devil to escape through as the congregations came in at the other side of the building. The crater of Vesuvius was for them the gateway to hell, and the crimson of the westering sun was the reflection of its flames. To them heaven and hell and their occupants were as real as the ceiling above our heads and the floor beneath our feet. When people planned their architecture by these beliefs, they were genuine beliefs. Ever since the end of the Mediaeval period they have gradually been declining in vitality, and now they hardly exist any more. Nowadays hell and heaven are, at the best, the threat of an uncertain penalty or the hope of a vague and unconvincing happiness.

In a paper such as this, which must necessarily be compressed, there is obviously a temptation to generalize rather too broadly. We must never overlook the theory of uneven development, which is as true in religion and psychology as it is in sociology and some of the sciences. There are still among us elements whose make-up is that of Mediaevalism, and some of still earlier times. This has nothing whatever to do either with intelligence or quality of personality. There are brilliant people among them. When these are challenged as to dogmas that obviously spring from the background of an earlier age, they refine them and refine them and refine them away until they seem as smooth and pleasant to the touch as the silky stones in a river bed. Examine them and they are still stones, as hard and as unyielding.

Most people look at least quizzically at eschatological beliefs, if they look at all. We scarcely now even sing the hymns of Sion in church. Pearly gates and golden floors no longer fascinate us, even though we may, on Trinity Sunday, spend a moment contemplating the white-clad saints playing quoits with golden crowns on a glassy sea. Hymns such as this we probably sing more for the tunes than for the meaning of the words, however we try to cover our embarrassment by palming them off as poetic imagery. Actually, most of them are remote from poetry. And how strange it would seem if a television parson were to take heaven and hell as his theme. Most of them prefer to dwell on how to make friends and influence people.

What is of great importance for us to grasp is that people do not miss

these beliefs. They are not conscious that the lack of them leaves any gap in their lives or their outlooks. We still talk glibly of the 'hope' of everlasting life. To many of these I have in mind the prospect would not be a hope but a horror. There are some to whom the mere thought is repugnant. I am truly puzzled by those philosophers of religion who write of the 'abyss of non-being' as that from which humanity recoils. What observation or experience makes them think that? We have an urge for personal survival that keeps most of us joyfully alive for many years, but we know the time comes when that urge loses its power. There exist reflective men and women who, when that time arrives, would prefer annihilation to resurrection. This may be a new phenomenon, but is unquestionably a real one. We have to remember that the life span has now extended far beyond the three score years and ten of the psalmist. Even that was a gross exaggeration for most men in his day. The eighth decade is not nowadays necessarily but labour and sorrow. I remember that great man Lionel Curtis telling me on his eightieth birthday that each year of his life had been happier than the previous one. Medical science and technology have weakened the power of death in more ways than one. No longer are disease and famine the instruments of blind fury that comes with th' abhorred shears, just as the fair Guerdon we hope to find, to slit the thin spun life. This fact is radically altering the emotional attitude of many to the inevitability of death and to what occurs subsequently. To people who feel as I have been trying to describe it would be the apex of irony if, after having been brought to birth without their consent, a God in whom they did not believe insisted on prolonging their existence into eternity against their will.

Is it irrelevant at this point to remark that the worst possible apologetic of Christianity for such folk is the argument that without immortality life loses its meaning? Manifestly there have been millions of people in the course of human history who have lived useful and significant lives without it. The values we hold dear and the direction of our conduct will vary with our beliefs as to the ultimate destination, but that is not to say life loses meaning altogether if we believe the grave to be the end. As Petulengro said, 'Life is sweet, brother, there's the wind on the heath'. Music is still music and beauty is still beauty whatever our future. Love, laughter and friendship remain. Nor will society collapse so long as humanity can be induced to find joy in these things. Speaking as a Christian myself, I would suggest that this form of apologetic is a blasphemy against life's Creator.

We must go still deeper into this fascinating question of the decay of eschatology. My personal conviction is now as it has always been, that only by relentless analysis have we any chance of glimpsing the light—and it may be no more than a glimpse we catch--at the end of the tunnel.

Christian thinkers have always been reluctant to admit the extent to

which the structure that the supernatural tradition has erected stands or falls together. Yet their consciousness of it is revealed in the way they struggle to maintain even the most indefensible elements in that structure. The scientists of the last century were right in discerning that, in destroying the validity of the first chapters of Genesis as objective truth, they had in fact undermined the whole system. The Fundamentalists were also right in discerning that they could not pick and choose, but must retain the whole unless they were to engage in a thoroughgoing revolution. The more open-minded thinkers were prepared to revalue the first chapters of Genesis, but never to abandon them altogether. They have tried to find theological meanings in the myth while rejecting it as science or history. They have tried to treat it as the poetic insights of a highly religious but culturally primitive people. This is not wise. The rear-guard actions of theology against science seldom have been. Whatever else the story of the Garden of Eden may be, it quite clearly has little to do with the origin of man or of moral evil. More likely it springs from the emergence of the Middle East from a matriarchal to a patriarchal form of society. In psychology and mythology the garden symbol often has a maternal significance. The reversal of the usual order of nature in the birth of woman from the man is highly indicative. Obviously womanhood was being devalued. Also society was identifying itself with the masculine principle of the developing conscious and was subordinating the feminine principle of the subconscious. All this undoubtedly has its importance in the development of Hebrew religion, but is remote from the doctrines that have been built upon it.

Theology, however, still bases itself on the theory of the Fall and Original Sin, derived from the literalist reading of this literature. Remove this theory and substitute the evolutionary alternative, and the transformation required becomes very far-reaching indeed. The doctrine of man has to be turned upside down. The implications are tremendous. The presence of evil in human life can no longer be attributed to deliberate choice. It is not the consequence of wilful disobedience. The whole idea of guilt must go into the melting pot, and with it the interpretation of the Incarnation as redemption from sin and guilt, and with that the conceptions we have formed of final judgment and reward and punishment.

The position would have been quite different had the theologians only been able to see Man primarily as sufferer instead of as sinner. The theory of evolution should surely have helped towards this re-interpretation. The more recent researches of the psychologists should have assisted them still further. Before he sinned, Man suffered. His sense of guilt arises out of his suffering and precedes his sin. In some extreme cases the sense of guilt drives the victim to crime, and the commission of the crime provides release from an intolerable burden of remorse. The conventional order

is reversed. Instead of deliberate false choice inducing guilt and causing suffering, it is suffering that brings on guilt and guilt that instigates the false choices. It should be clear, of course, that suffering here includes far more than physical pain in the narrow sense, important though that may be. More influential in this respect is the pain involved in the development of human relationships.

To accept this thesis is to transform the meaning of the Incarnation and the theory of the atonement. In the light of it the thought of the mediaeval Peter Abailard and of our own late member, Hastings Rashdall, comes into its own again. Perhaps we shall be even more drastic in our re-assessments than they. As for eschatology—we cannot revolutionize our notions of the first things without also reconsidering the last.

Some time ago, when visiting a Sunday School, I listened to a lesson given to an adolescent class by a new curate, straight from his theological college and anxious to pour out all the Biblical theology he had accumulated during his training. He had on the blackboard a line representing the human story, the five-act drama. It was marked off at the top with creation and the fall, passed on to Incarnation and redemption and ended in eschatology. It was neat and clever. But the whole programme took place on a stage cut off from its human audience by a proscenium beyond which none of them could venture. Though bathed in glorious light, it belonged to another realm, and the audience remained in darkness as passive spectators. A play of Aeschylus would have belonged less obviously to another age and would certainly have had more realism.

This metaphor of the drama and its audience may assist us in the final step of our analysis. The participation of an audience in a drama consists in their personal identification with the *dramatis personae*. They see themselves in the hero and their adversaries in the villains. It may be that they work out their own inner conflicts by seeing their better qualities in the hero and their worse in the villain. The moral judgment of the playwright becomes their own moral judgment, and by finding hidden desires openly portrayed they obtain a vicarious satisfaction. The more profound the play the more unreservedly the audience are able to project on to the actors their own inner lives. The drama is great, not because the plot reproduces actual occurrences, but because the representation and interplay of emotional experience are true. Everyone in the audience feels in his bones that although the externals may be different, he has been in many situations whose essentials are the same.

Great mythologies have arisen in somewhat similar manner. That so systematically and neatly expressed in diagrammatic form by my curate acquaintance must rank as one of them. Over the long millenia human experiences, passions, desires have formed themselves into dynamic patterns, the archetypes, which have become identified with imagined cosmic dramas. But the drama has not been played on the further side of a

proscenium and has not been recognized as fiction. The celestial regions themselves have provided the stage, but the theatre has been one of those in which the actors are often found moving among the stalls. The *dramatis personae*, their situation and environment and their activities have been as real as the floor beneath our feet and the ceiling above our head, as real as were hell and the devils to the monks of the Thebaid. They were as real as dreams and nightmares, and nothing is more real to us than those while they last. In fact the mechanism of their origin was not dissimilar from that of dreams and nightmares. In waking life external reality impinges upon the retina of the eye or drum of the ear and travels along the nerves to the brain where by mysterious alchemy it is transformed into the visions and the sounds which have meaning for the mind. In dream the reverse occurs. Now the realities are inner ones that arise from the unsearchable depths of the personality, mingling with all kinds of memories, hopes and fears on the way, and finally arriving at the motor centres of the brain so that we see visions and hear sounds, move uneasily in our sleep or smile enigmatically or weep. In the morning we awake perhaps physically exhausted or unaccountably refreshed. In myth these visions, arising from within, have not stopped at the eyelids. They have continued their journey through space until they have found a home for themselves in the celestial realms. Because, at the deepest levels, the constitution of the human mind is universal and collective, whole communities recognize them as their own realities and experience them as their own.

So far has mankind developed beyond this stage of myth-making that nowadays it occurs only in diseased or broken personalities in the form of paranoiac madness. Yet psychologists would say that the whole of the supernatural is a projection of the unconscious. It is not a fiction in the sense that the latest detective story is a fiction, because it consists of vital human experience. Therefore, when psychologists write histories of the archetypes and theologians reason about them, they are dealing with truth and reality. They are not just somebody's invention. And who is to say that since they emerge from such deeply hidden remoteness they do not participate in the structure of being itself?

However that may be, ever since the decline of Mediaevalism the peoples of the Western world have been increasingly unable to make these archetypal projections into the supernatural sphere. Nobody seems to know with any certainty why this change has taken place. Obviously, after the researches of Copernicus and Galileo, inter-stellar space ceased to provide convenient pegs. When these had done their work, the inductive reason continued whittling away the possibilities of satisfactory projection. We have probably all, of course, heard Fundamentalists arguing that since the vastness of the celestial regions is now becoming evident to us, it is easy to envisage some distant galaxy providing sites for heaven

and hell large enough to accommodate all the human souls that have ever existed. The answer of most of us will be that if they can believe that they can believe anything, and their theory is unsupported and worthless. The fact that we merely smile is again a demonstration of our inability to perform the mental acrobatic involved. We are not convinced that the Fundamentalists believe it themselves and scoff at them as jugglers with words, or at the best, with wishes.

The old astronomers may have to take a good deal of the responsibility. What they left intact Darwin and his successors finished off. The question then becomes how it was that they were able or were allowed to wreak this destruction? Was it not precisely because the symbols of the supernatural no longer had meaning that the leading men of Europe withdrew their minds from them and concentrated on the affairs of this earth? The terrestrial replaced the celestial because the celestial had lost its fascination. Some would say that the supernatural, and eschatology with it, lost their power because they had fulfilled their function. The machinery rusted and collapsed because there was no longer any work for it to do. It could be so, but that is another story and a long one. All we can do now is to take note of the collapse and clear the wreckage. 'Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?'

Eschatology, therefore, does not deal with an unacknowledged reality of whose existence we can convince the public by skilful evangelism. Rather is it a dream or a nightmare from which the peoples of the Western World have awakened. Not by any kind of medicine or soporific shall we induce the same dreams again. For our own sake and for the sake of the people whom we serve, we had better confront the fact honestly and courageously. To do so will involve us in a reconstruction of belief and a revolution in our liturgies so radical and so thoroughgoing that we shall hardly know where or how to begin. The most disturbing question is whether our religious institutions are not so inextricably bound up with the old traditional, mythological way of thinking that the task is impossible for them. Where and how can the break-through be made? Are the men to whom the Church commits the guardianship of its thought and its worship so immersed in the mythologies themselves that they are unable to stand in the place of the man who is not?

What, in any case, is to be the starting point. I should like to evade this question. I could, after all, legitimately argue that the question this paper had to answer was as to the validity of eschatology, and that to the best of my ability I have answered it. Eschatology is not valid. With that it looks as if I had written off the Christian religion altogether, because when eschatology is taken away there does not seem at first sight to be very much left. Surely the tragedy of the situation is that it should look like this. Eschatology has blinded us to the central truths.

Perhaps there was something providential about the fact that when

the more advanced minds of Europe found the symbols of Mediaevalism beginning to lose their vitality, it was the word 'faith' that, as if by instinct, they exalted as central and sovereign to religious experience. It was neither vision nor revelation nor dogma, but the inmost possible experience which, because it was unanalysable, could be traced only to the gift of God. Nor was it, incidentally, the kind of faith upon which the popular evangelist relies when he has run short of arguments. It was neither sloppy emotion nor wishful thinking. Psychologists have told me that when they have analysed some of their patients as far as they could and rid them of all the shady, neurotic and generally shoddy accompaniments of their religion, they have come upon something that was not susceptible to their analysis and defied their understanding. This was what the patient knew as his faith, but was no more capable of explaining than was the analyst.

From the beginning until now there have been mystics who have risen through all the stages of the heavens, floor by floor, as it were, and come at last to a sphere beyond the heavens themselves. Were we to describe this experience in terms of psychology, we should perhaps say that they had travelled through the different levels of the subconscious and through its undifferentiated ground and even beyond that. They have come at length to the ground of existence itself. What is it of them, what nameable component of their psyche, that has travelled this long journey? That is difficult to say, but the experience is that of sane persons and has in some instances had astonishing physical accompaniments, such as the ability to dispense with nourishment for impossible periods. When they have returned to our reality, they have claimed to have been close to the truest reality of all. They have known neither by vision nor by hearing nor by thought, but by a kind of assimilation superior to all these. They have not returned to our reality by desire or for pleasure, like a drowning man brought back to the surface, but reluctantly. It would be useless and irrelevant to ask of them the kind of question a philosopher might ask: about their values, for instance, or the nature of their satisfactions; how there could be music where there was no time or beauty, where there was no space. Their experience has been none the less real because necessarily indefinable to any who have not travelled with them to that order of reality. May not the faith which the psychologist cannot analyse be the first glimmer of that experience, and in the light of it does it not become evident why it is not susceptible of analysis? All that can be said is that the prayer of our Lord in John xvii has acquired for them a quality and a significance quite different from that of our Church fellowships, or of pulpit preachers or ecclesiastical diplomatists: 'That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.'

Were it not for the clause following, we might reasonably dismiss this

mystical experience as the prerogative of an élite which ordinary men and women could not aspire to share. But the same writer wrote also, 'that the world may believe that thou has sent me'. We are not dealing with what must necessarily be confined to the few, but what can qualify whole communities and societies. Nor are we dealing with dogmas to be inculcated nor emotional upheavals to be induced.

While I cannot claim competence to outline the new forms the theological and liturgical changes that have become necessary should take, I would suggest that this, and not the traditional mythologies, should be the starting point.

Self-examination will confirm this. Were it possible to question each person present as to the predominant Christian influence in their lives, it is safe to assume that not one would speak either of the hope of heaven or the fear of hell. Even less would anyone refer to the catastrophic end of history and the inauguration of the reign of righteousness. However much, as we grow older, we may look forward to the fruition of our labours in eternity, it is not vision of the mansions of the blessed that has captivated our imagination. Probably in every instance it has been the incandescence of some deeply spiritual person or an insight into Jesus Christ such as that which drew Peter's great confession at Caesarea Philippi. Eschatological ideas, if they have moved us at all, have done so as an afterthought. It is our present participation in the grace of God that has governed us. The spirit returns to its Creator; but as to how and in what manner speculation is useless. We for our part are content to serve the Lord.

# THE LOGIC OF ESCHATOLOGY

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The title of this paper may seem odd if you have not kept up to date with philosophical jargon. The word 'logic' has become almost a jargon word in recent philosophical writing. It now suggests meanings (and ambiguities) much looser than that defined meaning with which most of us were brought up. Most of us have thought that there was something, a subject perhaps or a discipline, called logic and that it was no less than a formalization of the 'laws' of thought. We could illustrate it my mentioning the syllogism or the Law of Contradiction of the Excluded Middle. If our acquaintance with the subject were wider we might even mention more recent developments like mathematical and symbolic logic.

In more ordinary speech the words logic and logical have also carried a more loaded or persuasive meaning. A good argument, we say, one which is careful and cogent, is a logical argument, a sound argument. A bad argument, one which manifests ignorance or prejudice, is illogical. A man who is guilty of this sort of argument is illogical; and in this connection the word suggests something like a moral judgment. Logical is a praise word. We admire the logical and deplore the illogical.

Or at least sometimes we do. There is another side to it. In most of us there is a strain (an illogical one?) which sympathizes with the romantics and anarchists. Sometimes we want to rebel against the 'rules' of logic as though they were like chains which fettered our feelings and imagination. We even intellectualize this rebellion and remind ourselves reassuringly of Pascal's remark that the heart has its reasons which reason knows not. The heart, the feelings have 'reasons' which are just as important as logical rules, maybe more important. Logic is not our only tool; there is more in heaven and earth than can be caught in the logical web. We are human beings, not computing machines. When we have said this much we are on the verge of a philosophical pronouncement: that there is a 'logic' of the illogical.

Now this sort of remark takes us very near that newer usage of the word 'logic' to which I referred. Since the later researches of Ludwig Wittgenstein and his pupils have become widely known, many philosophers have wanted to say that there is no one 'logic', no one pattern of thought and language, which can be exalted as the single criterion for all thought and reflection. There are (or so it has been suggested) as many 'logics' as there are subjects of human interest or modes of human enquiry. Many older philosophers were mistaken when they supposed that a single code of logical rules should be imposed upon every manner of human utterance. The mistake was not an unnatural one, and in the last hundred years or so it has been almost inevitable. In this period there has been something like a political alliance between logic, mathematics and natural science. Natural science is the great intellectual factor in our

age. Its achievements, however double-edged, have so impressed themselves upon our thinking that we cannot help but look with something like awe at that thing called 'Scientific Method'. In that method there is no place for feelings or individual tastes. A proposition in science, so we are told, either is or is not in accordance with the facts, and this will be revealed only by experiment and observation. We would not have it otherwise. In medicine, for example, it would be most unsettling if we could never the sure that our physician or surgeon *knew* what he was about with precise scientific accuracy. Is this the reason why psychiatric and psychosomatic medicine arouse controversy? We have the feeling that once 'the mind' is involved, the strictly scientific categories begin to break down. That would take us into another story, but it can serve to remind us that the popular conception of all science as a region from which personal factors have been expelled is something of a fiction. There is, if you like, more poetry in science than the myth of scientism allowed; even, perhaps, as there is more science in poetry than the Romantics admitted.

We have now come still nearer to the special sense of the word 'logic' in contemporary philosophy, but another section of the background could be filled in more fully. In recent years a great deal of publicity has been accorded to that philosophical doctrine called 'Logical Positivism'. Many people have been led to think that this doctrine is now dominant. This is not the case. As a doctrine held, it is now almost extinct; but its influence has been great, and much of the best work now being done in philosophy is best understood as at least a partial reaction against it. Logical Positivism was inflexible in its understanding of that word 'logic'. It took its position, its view of the world and of human enquiry, on the basis of that inflexibility. What I have especially in mind here is the so-called Verification Principle. According to this principle, all human utterances and speculations were to be judged in terms of a rigid theory of meaning. A statement was said to have meaning if and only if it could meet certain empirical tests; it was meaningful only if it could be verified (or falsified) by sense experience. The formulation of the Verification Principle marked the final stage in the canonization of scientific method. The only statements which met the verification test with ease and assurance were the statements in which natural science trade. Its statements became the true paradigm of meaningfulness.

The fate of other sorts of statements under this régime is well known. The discourse of metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, and theology was called meaningless. Such discourse could be neither true or false (or could not be shown empirically to be true or false); and if it could be neither true nor false, there was only one thing to call it: meaningless. But this was really too high-handed for even the most high-handed of philosophers. Such a situation could not remain stable, and the Verification Principle

was qualified in so many ways that at last it was almost qualified out of existence. The story of that philosophical argument is instructive, but what is of importance for us is the new breed of philosophy which was born from it. More recent philosophy is like Logical Positivism in its strong empirical flavour, but the empiricism is not of that kind which is anxious to consign the major part of human discourse to the rubbish heap of the meaningless. Instead it has been concerned to look very carefully at the many varieties of human language, bringing out both their common and distinctive features. One result of this 'linguistic' approach—linguistic because it begins with actual language and not with formalized rules—is that the word 'logic' has gained in flexibility since the days of Logical Positivism. Philosophers no longer expect or even hope to cut through the complexity and variety of language with an instrument so blunt as the Verification Principle. Meaningless is a word seldom on their lips. They are nearer common-sense in recognizing the wide range of meaningfulness. What they want to elucidate is the individual character or 'logic' of different kinds of linguistic usage, and the only way to do this is to examine each case in its own context. When we are doing ethics or theology, we are not doing physics or chemistry. But then, we are asked, What *are* we doing? This question is the starting point for philosophical enquiry. The philosopher's task, or a great part of it, is just this careful elucidation of the 'logics' of our modes of discourse. Because it is elucidatory and descriptive, it is a second-order activity. The philosopher of science is not doing what the physicist or chemist does. The philosopher of history or art or religion is not doing what the historian or artist or theologian does. If his work is sensitive enough, he may assist those engaged in first-order activity. The great critic can help the poet or novelist; the philosopher of science can help the scientific researcher. The distinction between first and second-order activities in this sense is important because it can save us from a common confusion. Despite the pretensions of Logical Positivism, the philosopher is not a legislator. It is not his function or right to lay down the law or to impose a 'logic' on anyone. At best he will help us to see the logic of our enquiries, the character of our different ways of speaking. Having seen this character with greater clarity, it is possible or even probable that we may find defects and inconsistencies in some of our linguistic habits. But it is for us to say whether we shall change these habits. In theological language we shall find many obscurities and peculiarities, but having seen all these vividly displayed, it is still for us to decide whether we shall use such language or modify it or reject it altogether. Professor John Wisdom of Cambridge has often likened the philosopher's labours to those of counsel for the prosecution and counsel for the defence. The work for which they are paid is to bring out all the facts, to show the full implications of the various pieces of evidence and to suggest the alternative ways in which

the evidence can be arranged and interpreted. In the end, however, it is for the jury, not counsel, to say Guilty or Not Guilty.

How then are we to undertake the elucidation of the logic of Christian eschatology? Traditionally, the word eschatology means simply the Doctrine of the Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell. But over the centuries of Christian history this doctrine has been variously understood and expressed. At times it has been the imagery of eschatology, whether simple or fantastic, which has most occupied believers. At other times imagery has played a minor part in the interpretation of the doctrine. This would lead us to conclude that there is no *single* Christian interpretation of the Last Things and hence no single logic of eschatology, but this conclusion may be premature. However much interpretations have varied, they still belong to a recognizable 'family' of eschatological doctrine. We need not single out a particular feature common to all interpretations in order to recognize this family resemblance, any more than we need single out a particular physical feature in order to see the family resemblance between members of a human family. In this paper I do not propose to classify or give an historical account of eschatological ideas, nor do I propose to isolate some common factor and call it the fundamental factor in eschatology. Instead I want to explore some of the intellectual and theological countryside in which eschatological doctrine is to be found. And this, I would remind you, is a second-order activity. I want to try to say something about what sort of a thing eschatology is, what sort of concepts are involved in it, and how these concepts might be analyzed and argued for or argued against.

We had better begin by anticipating a difficulty. It seems that eschatology is a matter of doctrine, that it arises within the context of Christian theology. Or put it more boldly and say that eschatology is a matter of dogma, a part of revealed theology. This preliminary observation would distinguish eschatology from certain other parts of theology. There are a number of questions, like that of the existence of God (and perhaps that of the immortality of the soul) which have traditionally been assigned to natural theology. Such questions, it was held, fall within the range of man's natural reason. Therefore philosophical or metaphysical arguments, without drawing upon revelation, were adequate to their demonstration. But in matters of revealed theology, metaphysical argument must be either supplemented or replaced by a very different sort of argument. One's authority for dogmatic belief is not reason, but, say, Scripture or the Church. Rational argument could never establish the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity, even though in some cases it might help. These doctrines are theological pronouncements which fall outside the range of human intellection. They cannot be known to men unless they are specially revealed by God. We might recall in this connection that no less an authority than St. Thomas Aquinas regarded the doctrine

of creation *ex nihilo* as a matter of revelation. Reason, he maintained, might lead us to conclude either that matter was eternal or that it was 'created'. Only revelation can decide the question.

Is not the doctrine of the Last Things in this category? In so far as we are thinking of specifically Christian doctrine, we may have to say, Yes. The belief in the immortality of the soul may, on some reckonings, fall within the range of natural theology. But to believe in the immortality of the soul is not the same as to believe in judgment, heaven and hell. Perhaps there are rational considerations which would lead us to favour or disfavour belief in rewards and punishments after death, but such considerations could hardly be conclusive, and they could equally lead to very different accounts of what merited reward or punishment and of what those rewards and punishments would be like. (This at least would seem to be the evidence of the comparative study of religions.) So then, if the doctrine of the Last Things is essentially a matter of revelation, can we profitably discuss its logic? Can we discuss it as though there were reasons for and against it?

I believe that we can, in this sense. Obviously matters of dogma or revelation are distinct from matters of natural theology. None the less it is still proper to discuss their logic or character. Our attention in the first instance will not be directed toward rational arguments which might be adduced in their favour. We shall look instead at their religious setting, at the way in which they are expressed, and above all at the way they are 'religiously' defended in schemes of Christian apologetic. The character of eschatology is certainly discussable, but that character may only be made plain to us within the whole context of Christian theology and not in isolation therefrom. In this sense it is different from, say, the question of God's existence. The rational arguments for God's existence are expresssed in such a way that they are intended to make sense quite independently from the rest of the content of Christian theology. (Whether they in fact fulfil this intention is quite another question.) But Christian eschatology may make sense only in relation to the rest of Christian belief.

How does the apologist defend his eschatological scheme? Here (I hope for the sake of clarity and not to make the matter seem more paradoxical) we may make some commonplace observations already hinted at. In these days the apologist is not likely to begin by enumerating considerations which weigh in favour of belief in some sort of 'natural' immortality of the soul, thinking that he will thereby lead us on to the Christian position. Most recent writers have pressed one point above all others: that there is but a slender connection between (metaphysical) ideas of immortality and Christian expectations of the Last Things. (This may or may not be true. It seems to me that the alleged distinction between Immortality and Resurrection has been worked far too hard. That there is a distinction is obvious; that there is so radical a distinction

is doubtful.) Those who stress this distinction testify to my earlier point, that in Christian belief eschatological expectation is a matter of faith based on dogma rather than on rational argument. If the advocacy of eschatology does not begin with argument for immortality, where does it begin? With Scripture? We may have to say, Yes; but that answer makes our problem more complicated. In this way. There is no such thing as *the* scriptural doctrine of the Last Things. Even if we confine ourselves to the New Testament alone we find a bewildering variety (or tantalizing ambiguity) in eschatology. What *really* was the eschatology of Jesus? Was it 'futurist' or 'realized' or 'thoroughgoing'? Strictly on the basis of the documentary evidence, can we say anything decisive about this at all? Whatever choice you make you can find a scholar to support it. These are textual and historical questions, and they are not central for our purpose in this paper. I mention them only to bring out the fact that the Christian apologist, in giving an account of eschatology, cannot (and in fact does not) simply point to the Bible.

I am disposed to think—perhaps wrongly—that this difficulty is connected with (or reflected in) the ordinary Christian man's haziness about precisely what he *does* believe about eschatology. This haziness is a special one. It is significantly different from the general haziness of most Christians in theological matters which arises from an increasing ignorance of Scripture and doctrine. We don't expect the layman to be capable of succinct and accurate exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity. But if he were of sufficient education and possessed of sufficient time and interest, he could give an account of that doctrine, of what it means and of how it came to mean what it means. The situation is not the same with the doctrine of the Last Things. However good the education, however ample the time and interest, we should not be surprised if his account remained hazy. I think we can understand why this should be so. In some ways, perhaps, the doctrine of the Last Things may *look* more straightforward than, say, the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity is defined abstractly, metaphysically. Death, judgment, heaven and hell seem far more concrete. However little we know, we feel that we might grasp these things more readily than the intricacies of the *homoousion*. Men have portrayed Judgment on canvas and glass, and at times they have seemed obsessed with the desire for pictorial representations of heaven and hell. (You cannot draw pictures in this way of Incarnation, Atonement or Trinity.) But the difficulty here begins to show itself when we remember that such pictorial representations are very much the creatures of time and place. They date very quickly. It is possible that the imagery of great Christian art and the verbal splendour of the Apocalypse continue to exercise great influence over our thinking and imagining. But perhaps because we have been so thoroughly conditioned to scientific ways of thought, we know that these images, verbal and pictorial, are *only*

images. We do not really believe that anyone (not even Dante) has supplied us with an error-free guide book to the topography of heaven and hell. And so we say to ourselves that the 'reality' must be concealed behind the images. Strip them away and see what lies behind the curtain.

This is the kind of thing we say in many connections, especially in religion and theology. We say it of the definitions of Nicaea and Chalcedon. And yet—and this is the distinction I want to emphasize—there is great difference. We know that even the rich and suggestive illustrations of S. Augustine are no more than pointers to the ultimately mysterious nature of Triune Deity. Theologians have even erected standards (interestingly, they are usually negative ones) for judging the adequacy of our symbols and images. We reject as almost self-evidently inadequate some of the symbolism which has tended to cluster, for example, around the doctrine of Atonement. We do not expect a great deal of the language which purports to describe the Trinity, Incarnation and Atonement. Dim approximations, perhaps; no more. Yet these doctrines are central to Christian theology partly because of this mysterious, image-less character. They are metaphysical doctrines. They purport to tell us something about the *whole* of the world: its inner reality, its true significance, its utter dependence upon the creative and redemptive activity of God. They may be expressed partly in narrative and partly in metaphysical language, but they aim to tell us how things *are* and what things *mean*. And just because they are about the totality of things, they cannot avoid an almost unmanageable generality. This is the fate of metaphysical description.

The doctrine of the Last Things is conspicuously different. The imagery and symbolism in which it is clothed suggest not so much a metaphysical and therefore high general character. Rather they suggest something 'historical', almost scientific, in character. In this the doctrine of the Last Things can be compared to the doctrine of Creation. And perhaps my very inadequate description is borne out by this further fact: The so-called 'conflict between religion and science' always seems to erupt in the neighbourhood of these theological doctrines of the Beginning and End of things. This is understandable enough when we realize how much the language of these doctrines suggests that they should be understood historically or scientifically. Much of the trouble in the last century arose because the doctrine of Creation *seemed* to be some rather special kind of scientific theory. Now then, no one could ever say this about the doctrine of the Trinity, whatever else he might wish to say about it. There appeared to be a *factual* discrepancy between the narratives of Genesis and scientific theory. For all I know there may appear to be a factual discrepancy between eschatology and Psychical Research. What happens when these discrepancies are noticed? Usually the theological doctrine is altogether discounted in the popular estimation or else the theologians

are pressed to re-state it in such a way that the discrepancy either disappears or is said to be irrelevant to the 'real' substance of the doctrine.

Does something like this happen with the doctrine of the Last Things? Science is at present in no position to pass on to us any assured results about the nature of life after death, even though it may have eschatological-sounding things to say about the prospective life span of our solar system. However this may be, the traditional ideas of Judgment, Heaven and Hell *look* every bit as 'historical' and 'factual' as accounts of the beginnings of life and of the world. And yet (apart from the disputed deliverances of Psychical Research) there is no more to be said, for or against them, scientifically speaking, than there is about the narratives of Genesis. There are no adequate empirical grounds for asserting the antecedent probability of a final Judgment or of heaven or hell. So then, what happens (or what would happen) if these quasi-scientific elements in eschatology were submitted to pressure? Once again the theologian's first move would probably be to remove the doctrine from all contact with fact, hoping thereby to resolve the apparent conflict. He would say, for example, that of course Judgment is not at all meant to be understood in terms of old-fashioned pictures of the Great Assize. It would be absurd, he might continue, to think of Judgment as some sort of judicial proceeding taking place on some sort of celestial courtroom. And of course, he might go on, heaven and hell are not 'places' in space which explorers might one day happen upon when space-travel is an everyday thing. There is no Up and Down about heaven and hell; indeed they have no topography at all. These spatial images are *only* images. What matters is the reality to which the images point. . . . In other words, his procedure is to de-historicize, de-temporize, de-factualize (if you like, de-mythologize) the traditional doctrine. But when eschatology has been so carefully shorn of its apparently historical and factual covering, what remains? (We may notice here that it may be much easier to weigh what remains after removal of some of the images which have been used to describe the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation. Because, as we noted, they are essentially metaphysical doctrines whose historical and factual elements are less insistent.)

Perhaps we can approach this difficulty from a slightly different direction. Whenever we are presented with what appears to be a factual or historical claim, we quite naturally ask what grounds there are for believing the claim to be true. There may be few absolute certainties about events in the distant past, but we know how we might support the statement, for example, that Caesar invaded Britain. We have, however, no apparatus whatever for assessing factual statements about life beyond the grave. When people claim to give empirical evidence for such a belief as that in the transmigration of souls, we are struck mostly by its thinness. There is, in other words, no particular empirical evidence which

makes one type of eschatology more probable, empirically, than another. Sometimes, of course, there may be evidence *against* a particular theory, and this would lead us to doubt it. But what now happens when the Christian apologist says that we have got things muddled, that he does not *intend* his eschatological beliefs to have *any* empirical consequences? By judgment, heaven and hell, he does not *mean* to suggest places or times which some empirical evidence might count for and other might count against. Will we not wish to ask him just what he *does* mean by his doctrine?

It is at this point, however we get to it, that we begin to see the crucial issues that confront any attempt to trace out the logic of eschatology. Two comments seem to be necessary, the first of which was suggested at the beginning of this paper. When the theologian has assured us that we are not meant to take eschatological imagery literally, he must (at least in his own mind) have some idea of how this imagery *should* be interpreted. His first (some will say his only) resource will be to draw upon the language of dogma, revelation, authority. To believe in heaven and hell is not like believing in the relative probability of scientific hypotheses. We do not believe in heaven and hell because we have empirical grounds for trusting the reports of visionaries. We believe them because they are a part of the whole scheme of Christian belief and are accepted on the same authority that we accept Christian belief itself. Someone might put it like this: we cannot believe in the divinity of Christ and at the same time disbelieve something which He did believe, i.e. the fact of Judgment. We may be agnostic about his 'historical knowledge', the dating of the Psalms, etc.; but this is very different from his belief in judgment. Or, we can if we like, speak of the binding authority of Scripture and the tradition of the Church. This sort of talk may or may not appeal to us, but at least we understand it. If I ask a man why he believes in Judgment, heaven and hell, and he replies, 'Because Jesus did,' I cannot pretend not to understand him. (Indeed, there may be times when we find this the only possible answer to that question.) If our talk about eschatology is confined to this sort of thing, we shall know how to set about describing its logic. We shall look for its congruence with other doctrinal beliefs. We shall try to see why it is said to depend upon other doctrine and to discern what the logical nature of that dependence may be. This would by no means be a profitless exercise. It might be very useful, for the interconnections of different doctrines are not often brought out with thoroughness. But however profitable in some ways, this procedure would have one great limitation: we should be moving entirely within the circle of belief, and so giving no assistance to anyone who was outside that circle. To state it more dramatically: we might just as well be describing the inner workings and interconnections of astrological or other occult doctrines. No doubt there is a logic of

astrology possessed of some intrinsic interest. But to grasp this logic is not to be persuaded that astrology tells us the sorts of things about the world that it claims to tell us. We are not content to do no more than display the logic of a mode of thought. We want to display that logic in a way which suggests that the mode of thought is valid. To discuss eschatology wholly in terms of revealed doctrine accepted on authority may be the theologian's easier option, but it means giving us as hopeless any attempt to justify eschatological doctrine.

This (whether it is made explicit or not) is, I suspect, an important reason why some theologians have taken another course. Instead of staying contentedly within the circle of belief, they have ventured to step outside it, at least a little way outside. In bringing out the character of doctrines, they have tried to show how these doctrines might be suggested by other beliefs of a more ordinary, less controversial kind. They have done this in reply to that question I posed earlier: What remains of eschatology when it has been shorn of its accidental imagery and symbolism? In the mind of the man who asks it, this is the basic problem, and it includes at least two questions: (1) What is the real heart or point of eschatology? and (2) Why should we accept it?

Everyone can think of some things which might be said here. One could speak of morality, as so many philosophers have done when they approached the question of immortality. Our moral insights, our sense of the given-ness of obligation and duty, oblige us (so it is said) to think in terms of Judgment of some kind or other. Were this life the whole of the story, moral struggle and its consequences would be pointless. At the same time, some kind of conception of heaven and hell suggests itself if we are to make sense both of our moral experience and of our conviction of human freedom. There are also other considerations wherein the logical and metaphysical, the natural and the revealed are subtly intermixed. Take this passage from St. Thomas Aquinas:

> 'The word I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.' Things in a process of change are not fit subjects for judgment before they have come to a stop; no action can be fully assessed before it is finished and its results are evident. What may seem to be profitable at first may turn out to be damaging. Judgment cannot be pronounced on a man until he has run his course; until then he can switch from good to evil or from evil to good in many ways, from bad to worse or from good to better. 'It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.'
>
> All the same, reflect that although a man's personal career ends with death, his life still goes on in a sense, and is affected by what happens afterwards. He lives on in men's memories, and his reputation, for good or ill, may not correspond to his real character. He lives on also in his children, who, so to speak, are part of their parents: 'his father is dead, and he is as if he were not dead, for he has left one behind him that is like himself'—though good parents may have wicked children, and wicked parents good children. Furthermore, he

survives in the results of his actions; infidelity continues to breed until the end of time from the deceits of Arius and other seducers, and Christianity continues to grow from the teaching of the Apostles. Then again, he continues in his body, sometimes given honourable burial, sometimes left unburied, but always eventually crumbling into dust. Finally, he lasts in the projects on which he had set his heart, which sometimes come to quick failure and sometimes endure longer.

All these affairs are submitted to Divine Judgment, but a full and public verdict cannot be pronounced and sentence passed while time rolls on its course. How right and proper, then, a final judgment on the last day, when everything whatsoever about a man will be manifestly displayed.

(*Summa Theologica*, 3a.lix.5. Trans.T. Gilby)

There are any other number of other considerations which one might raise, and they would all bear a family resemblance to one another. Each, in its way, will make a metaphysical assertion, some assertion (to put it very grandly) about the ultimate nature of reality. No scheme of eschatology will make sense to the man who does not take ethical and other value judgments seriously. (By taking them seriously I mean viewing them as indicative of some metaphysical reality.) And no man can take such judgments seriously if he resolutely refuses to admit that the world is of a determinate character, that it is like *this* and not like *that*. For example, that it purposive and good, not chaotic and evil. Such assertions, of course, presuppose that metaphysical enquiry is not only possible but desirable. That presupposition has lately been unfashionable. But whether fashionable or not (and there are signs that it may be becoming more so), no theology can proceed very far without it. Even the violently anti-metaphysical theology of Karl Barth and his neo-Calvinist followers finds itself involved in self-contradiction when it denies all validity to metaphysics. Such a denial is itself metaphysical and, ironically, an uncompromising revelational theology has implicit metaphysical foundations which are concealed only by a kind of theological sleight-of-hand.

If there is any force at all in this argument, one conclusion seems to stand out. When we describe or attempt to justify the scheme of Christian eschatology, we are obliged to operate with two things in mind. We must first try to understand the doctrines in the context of Christian theology as a whole. Such understanding presupposes historical as well as theological spade-work. What are the Biblical and historical facts? Why did the primitive Church make use of the eschatological categories that it did and not of others? How far are the doctrines separable from the various images and symbols which have grown up about them at different times and places? These questions are primary, and they are the task of the historical theologian. But even if we were to imagine that each one of them could be settled beyond all reasonable doubt, we should still have to move on to a second sort of problem. (Christian historico-theological enquiry is basically no different from that enquiry we might undertake

concerning Egyptian or Sumerian or Chinese religion.) To understand the doctrines in this sense is not to accept them or live by them. That second consideration is the one I have called metaphysical, a label which is satisfactory so long as we mean by it something which incorporates not only metaphysical analysis, but a good deal more. What are the grounds for entertaining belief in any eschatological doctrine? In what sense, if any, can there be rational grounds or reasons for preferring one such doctrine to another? What relevance, if any, have non-theological (e.g. scientific) factors in determining the adequacy or truth of eschatological doctrines? What force are we to allow to the observable moral (or other) consequences of particular doctrines in deciding upon their adequacy? What weight can reasonably be accorded to the cumulative evidence of tradition, of what men have actually believed? What light does psychological, anthropological and sociological theory throw on these issues?

I have now spoken of two different classes of questions which we shall wish to ask. Yet it is obvious that these two classes cannot really be separated. The questions overlap, criss-cross, lead us back and forth from doctrine to history to metaphysics. If we begin by asking why *any* eschatological doctrine should deserve credence, we are forced to look at the whole theological setting of that doctrine. (In the Christian instance we shall have to see that any 'justification' will entail a deeper grasp of Christology and of the Doctrine of the Church.) But the two classes remain distinct, and to ignore the distinction could mislead us either into circular argument or into thin and abstract speculations divorced from historical reality.

Can we then in conclusion suggest any other positive features necessary to a re-examination of the logic of eschatology? Perhaps I may be allowed to make one or two suggestions which seem to me to follow from my discussion thus far. Some of the criticism of traditional Christian eschatology has tended to write off eschatological doctrine as pre-scientific and therefore unworthy of attention. In some measure that criticism was a legitimate reaction against certain kinds of theology. It sprang in part from moral protest. The idea of a God who tortured men eternally, whatever their sins, had become morally repugnant. If God really was like this, He was not as good as many good men. Yet this moral protest has its own eschatological background. It makes assertions explicit or implicit, about the character of God and about how God will or will not exercise his admitted power, justice, and love. What are the grounds of *this* eschatology? Are they rooted in Scripture or revelation, in moral feelings, in empirical evidence? Why have some thought this alternative eschatology to be self-evident when, to give only one example, it is anything but self-evident to Hindus and Buddhists? I mention this example only to bring out a fairly simple point. If we are to base an eschatology

on firm foundations, we shall have to recognize that there are more alternatives than popular medieval ideas and late nineteenth-century optimism. In other words, we must subject the presuppositions of our grandfathers to the same scrutiny that we subject those of *their* grandfathers. What one age regards as self-evident is no final criterion for theological or metaphysical truth.

Another point. There has been much talk of recent years to the effect that we need to fashion a new Christian eschatology 'relevant to our age'. This is a dangerously ambiguous slogan. (If we need a forcible reminder of this we can turn back with profit to Kierkegaard's searching essay, *The Present Age*.) On the one hand, the slogan may mean that our age is particularly in need of eschatological doctrine because, through scientific achievement, we are in a position to bring about *one* sort of *eschaton* with themo-nuclear weapons. This is no doubt true, but in itself it does not provide us with any self-evident content for this new eschatology. God's purposes, we may suppose, have not now become dependent upon human ingenuity. On the other hand, it may mean that because our age is in some ways different from other ages, the truth about the Last Things must perforce be different from what it was in other ages. This may or may not be so, but simply to assert it is not to demonstrate it. It might turn out that our age is different from others in part because it has wrongly neglected those eschatological matters necessary to its own health. And sometimes when people have talked about the need of an eschatology relevant to our age, they have meant no more than that they would like something which our age could find more agreeable. But surely it *may* well be the case that a valid eschatology can never be 'agreeable' in this sense.

In all that has preceded, I have tried to keep my promise to indulge only in the second-order activity of analysis. Perhaps now, at the end, I may be permitted a brief indulgence in first-order polemic. I should like to argue for a restoration of the conviction that there is an objectivity and independency about theological doctrines. We have too often tended to surround them with subjective fog. We have sought for 're-assessments' and 're-statements' which would remove their objective reality and reduce them to subjective conveniences. It is no wonder that the whole theological enterprise has become increasingly suspected of hypocrisy or 'double-think'. What we might do instead is to bring out their 'given' character, sharpen their contours, define and clarify. Only when this has been done will we (and others) be in a position to make a reasonable and free decision to accept or reject them. You do not help a man to decide in any matter by telling him that he can make of his options anything that he pleases, because all that is involved is his personal preference. This may be the logic of taste; it is not the logic of truth. But by this I do not mean to commend dogmatism. As Christian apologists

we cannot simply assert that $x$ is true and $y$ is false. As I have tried to point out, we shall have to establish the grounds of doctrinal belief, to show by whatever means at our disposal that one sort of belief has more to be said for it than another. If we despair of doing this, it would be more honest to give up the game altogether rather than to retreat into subjectivism. The demands of neither reason nor faith can be met in this way; and just those are the demands which have to be met. This eschatological question, because it is so pressing, may present us with a unique opportunity to re-establish the bases of metaphysical theology. It is not a task to be accomplished in a day, or even in that long dark night which lies before us. To realize this is perhaps to realize the *eschaton* of our own time.

# DEATH AND THE RELEVANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD

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## I

There can be no doubt that belief in some effective form of personal survival from physical death is one of the basic premisses of Christianity; or, to put it another way, if death means the total annihilation of the individual person, the very purpose of Christianity would be rendered null and void. It may, therefore, seem a strange thing that in the New Testament Jesus is represented as only once dealing specifically with this issue, and the passage concerned is indeed the only one in the whole of the New Testament writings in which the need for justifying this fundamental belief is even noticed.[1] The passage, to which I make reference, is well known: it occurs in *Mark* xii, 18-27, and it is substantially reproduced in the other two Synoptic gospels. It records the answer of Jesus to the Sadducees who had sought to demonstrate the absurdity of belief in the resurrection of the dead by citing the case of seven brothers, who in obedience to the requirements of the Levirate marriage, had each in turn married the same woman. Jesus' method of refutation at first sight seems strange and rather unconvincing. After telling the Sadducees that they neither understood the scriptures nor the power of God, he quotes in justification of the belief the recorded words of God to Moses in the curious episode of the Burning Bush in *Exodus* iii, 6, namely, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' and he concludes, 'He is not the God of the dead but of the living.'

The argument used by Jesus here was essentially a Jewish one, but it has a significance which transcends its historical context. It reveals that, from the very beginning, the essential basis of the Christian belief in some form of *post-mortem* life has been the traditional conception of God. In other words, Christian belief in this respect was not originally inferred from some estimate of human nature, after the manner of Platonic or Orphic thought; it arose instead from what was assumed to be the character and nature of God. The logic of the argument of Jesus, as recorded in this crucial Markan passage, is that God is such that it is impossible to conceive of him as allowing the existence of his servants to be terminated by death.

To the student of the history of religions, this Markan passage has, however, a further significance and one that is very relevant to our subject here. It resides in the fact that we are told that Jesus was questioned by

[1] Such a passage as I *Cor.* xv, 12-57 really deals with doubt about the resurrection of Christ and the nature of the resurrection of the body, not with scepticism about the possibility of any form of resurrection.

'Sadducees which say that there is no resurrection'. Now these Sadducees were no obscure sect of heretics in the body of contemporary Judaism; they were members of the priestly aristocracy and represented the tradition of religious conservatism among the Jews of that day. They preserved the ancient belief of Yahwism that, when he died, the individual person virtually ceased to exist—only some shadowy, ineffective part of his being descended into Sheol, where the shades of the dead lived on in a kind of half-life, amid dust and gloom. Moreover, and this was very important, the dead in Sheol were outside the effective care of Yahweh, Israel's God.[2] It is important to note too that the subject at issue in this Markan passage is the resurrection of the dead, and not immortality. That this is so again reminds us of the Jewish origin of Christianity. The Jews were Semites, and they shared in the common Semite view of human nature which was current in the ancient Near East, namely, that man was a psycho-physical organism.[3] This meant that the Jews did not think, as did certain Greek and Indian thinkers, that the individual human being was made up of an immortal soul and a mortal body; but they regarded soul and body as constituting an essential unity. Since this unity was obviously shattered by the death and decay of the body, the individual person as such ceased to exist, which in turn meant that, if a *post-mortem* life was at all envisaged, then the body had to be raised or reconstituted. Hence any idea of a *post-mortem* life necessitated a resurrection of the physical body.[4]

Jesus evidently accepted the idea of the resurrection of the dead. To this degree he was on the side of the Pharisees against the Sadducees,[5] and to that degree he was a 'modernist', opposing the traditional views of the old-fashioned Sadducees, As we have seen, he justified his belief by appeal to the accepted conception of the nature and character of God. But, since in so doing, he was representing a new phase in Jewish religious thought, it is important that we understand how this change came about; for upon such an understanding depends our appreciation of the peculiar character of the Christian belief in a life after death. The issue here is involved in the evolution of the Hebrew idea of God.

The origin of the deity who became the God of Israel, namely, Yahweh, remains one of the fascinating problems of Old Testament study. But what we do know for certain about this god is that he was in origin essentially an ethnic god, i.e. the god of a people, or rather of a confedera-

[2]Cf. W. O. E. Oesterley, *Immortality and the Unseen World* (London, 1930), pp. 86-92.

[3]Cf. A. R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel* (University of Wales, 1949).

[4]The Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones in *Ezekiel* xxxvii, 1-14, is significant in this connection, for, although its immediate reference is to the spiritual resurrection of Israel, the imagery employed witnesses to what resurrection necessitated in the mind of a contemporary Jew.

[5]As was Paul according to *Acts* xxiii, 6-18.

tion of tribes—the so-called Twelve Tribes of Israel.[6] Throughout almost all the books of the Old Testament the basic theme, to which reference is constantly being made, is that of Yahweh's relations with Israel, his people. Individual men and women only have significance in so far as their conduct for good or ill affect Israel's relations with its national god. According to this Yahweh faith, individuals, and they only Jews, if they lived piously, would be rewarded by a long life and material prosperity, and they would be blessed with many sons who would perpetuate their name in Israel—indeed that was the only kind of immortality that the faithful Israelite could expect, because at death he was doomed, like all other men, to a wretched half-life in the gloomy realm of Sheol. Moreover, it is also important to note in this connection that the Yahwist prophets fiercely condemned the practice of the ancient mortuary rites, which presupposed that the dead lived on in their graves, on the ground that such acts constituted disloyalty to Yahweh.[7]

Such an ethnic faith, however, was an artificial creation, and it could not satisfy the deep-rooted spiritual needs of individual men and women. Now this defect of Yahwism worked together with two other factors to create a peculiar tension in Hebrew religion. The Yahwist prophets, as we see throughout so many of the Old Testament writings, were concerned to proclaim Yahweh both as the only true God and as the God of justice. But such doctrines soon produced some serious religious problems. Experience taught that the pious did not always flourish and live to a good old age: too often they were overwhelmed with misfortune and died young. How then were these grim facts to be squared with belief in a supreme, omnipotent and just God? In the *Book of Job* we find this fundamental problem discussed with great agony of spirit, but without solution. Only gradually, and only then it would seem after the sufferings of the Maccabean wars, did the Jews begin to find a way out of the problem by adopting the idea of a resurrection of the dead, which enabled the pious to receive after death divine recompense for the inequalities of their earthly life.[8] The adoption of this belief certainly helped to relieve the spiritual tension which we sense in the *Book of Job*; but the basic problem was not solved, namely, that of the meaning of death.

In the Yahwist version of the creation and fall of Adam in *Genesis* iii, death is represented as the penalty imposed by God on mankind for the sin of its first parents; this penalty, of course, presupposes that God

[6]Cf. M. Noth, *Das System der Zwölf Stämme Israels* (Stuttgart, 1930), p. 58, see also pp. 46-60; W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore, 1946), p. 215.

[7]Cf. Ad. Lods. *Israël* (Paris, 1949), pp. 260, 415, 549–852; W. O. E. Oesterley & T. H. Robinson, *Hebrew Religion* (London, 1930), pp. 326-7.

[8]Cf. II *Maccabees* xii, 38-45; also vii, 9-11, 14, 29; xiv, 46.

originally created Adam (and his descendants?) to be immortal. Death, accordingly, is regarded as something which was not originally part of the purpose of God, and which God was obliged to impose when Adam's defection thwarted his purpose. The resurrection of the dead in turn amounted to the reversal of the penalty of death. Now this meant that death was not accepted as a natural event, terminating the life of the individual being in this world; for ideally death should never have occurred.

This traditional Jewish evaluation of human life in the light of God's providence passed naturally and without dispute into Christian belief. The only point about which question was raised concerned the physical resurrection of the dead, which proved objectionable to the Orpheo-Platonic views of certain Greek converts that only the soul could by nature be immortal—in Paul's *Epistle to the Corinthians* we see him struggling to accommodate the traditional Jewish belief to such Greek objections.[9] Paul also in his teaching remained generally faithful to his Jewish heritage in regarding death as the consequence of human sin; but in many of his references to death there is an unresolved ambiguity, so that at times he seems to be speaking of death not as a physical but as a spiritual event, and he is even found personifying death—'the last enemy is death', so that it appears as some evil power, supreme among those spiritual forces which are hostile to God.[10]

To the student of the history of religions, the Christian conception of God is, accordingly, seen as the product of the conversion of the national god of Israel into a personal deity intimately concerned with the lives of individual men and women. The chief factors which implemented this process of transformation were the assertion of the Yahwist prophets that their god was uniquely omnipotent and moral by nature, and the consequent demand that he should justify this character in his dealings with individual persons.

The Christian doctrine of God may, therefore, be classified as an ethical monotheism. It accordingly authorizes a view of the world as the creation of an omnipotent Being, whose Will and Purpose are wholly good. To mankind, the highest of his creatures, he is the Loving Father and Source of their life and well-being. God consequently embodies the principle of creative good, and there is no place in his being for what is contrary thereto. Now, this view of God leaves unexplained the obvious evidence of the existence in the universe of a parallel principle of decay and death. It refuses to admit that decay and death constitute as natural

[9] I *Cor.* xv, 35 sq.; II *Cor.* iv, 16, v. 1-4.

[10] I *Cor.* xv, 26. 'Nirgends wird der Versuch gemacht, den Tod als Naturvorgang zu interpretieren und ihn dadurch zu neutralisieren . . . ' (*Theologische Wörterbuch z, N.T.* III, p. 14). This comment refers to Paul, but it is equally applicable to all the New Testament documents.

and as necessary a process as creation and life. It seeks also to explain human death as contrary to the original purpose of God, and it attributes its cause to human sin. But it neglects to explain the cause of death as it affects all other forms of life. Instead it concentrates attention on what might be termed the drama of mankind, and this orientation of interest significantly expresses itself in the philosophy of history which provides the framework of the Christian doctrine of salvation.[11]

## II

Because we have been brought up in the tradition of ethical monotheism, we naturally assume its validity, without question, as being the only reasonable way of conceiving God. We know as a matter of fact that other conceptions of the divine have, and still continue, to be held in many other religions; but we never feel that it is worthwhile to consider the possibility that any of these conceptions may contain truth which is not included in the Christian conception. We also recognize that ethical monotheism involves certain difficulties, especially concerning the origin and nature of evil; but we generally conclude that such difficulties arise from the limitations of the human mind and constitute necessary tests of our faith. This means in turn that we do not pause to consider whether certain aspects of life which seem evil to us are a natural and necessary part of reality and as such must be included in our idea of God.

When we strive sympathetically to understand other religions as representing other men's attempts to interpret their experience of the world and as embodying also their highest hopes and deepest fears, we see that their ideas of God are inspired possibly by a deeper appreciation of some aspects of reality than are ours. At first sight the symbolic imagery in which these ideas are invested may seem very strange and bizarre to our minds, but on an objective comparison they will be found to be no more so than the traditional symbolic imagery with which we have become familiar in Christianity—it is helpful in this connection to remember how puzzling Eastern art is to our Western taste and how discordant Eastern music sounds to our Western ears.

It may perhaps be fairly said that, when we compare the Christian conception of God with the general impression which we receive from a consideration of the ideas of God current in the great religions of the East, the latter seem to embody certain grim aspects which are absent from the Christian view. In other words, it appears that in the East men have found the power which rules the universe to be not wholly benevolent, but to manifest aspects of its being which are hostile to human interests and aspirations. This conviction has taken various forms of expression in the religions concerned. Thus, in ancient Persia it seems likely that at a very early stage God was regarded as a kind of ambivalent

[11]Cd. S. G. F. Brandon, *Time and Mankind* (London, 1951), pp. 170 sq.

being, embodying in himself the contrary principles of Light and Darkness, of good and evil.[12] In his reform of Persian religion, Zarathustra appears to have repudiated this conception, substituting for it the idea that the universe was the battle-ground of two opposing powers, Ahuramazdah, the Good Lord, and the Druj, or the Lie.[13] Whether this was an absolute dualism of the principles of God and Evil is not certain, but in later Zoroastrianism it was believed that ultimately this cosmic struggle would end with the overthrow of the evil Ahriman and the triumph of Ohrmazd, i.e. Ahura Mazdah.[14] Now, it is important for us to understand that this view of God or of the divine government of the universe was not just a fantastic belief stemming from pagan superstition. It did in fact represent a realistic appreciation of the world according to human experience. After all, life, as it presents itself to us, is a fairly even balance of good and evil, of light and darkness, of creation and destruction. That later Zoroastrianism taught the eventual triumph of the Good over the Evil is undoubtedly to be interpreted as the expression of the natural human hope that Good will win in the end; as such it represents a spiritual aspiration over the logic of experience. But the true point of significance for us here lies in the fact that in ancient Persia men would not close their eyes to the reality of the existence of a force in the world which made for decay and death, and was destructive of all that man regards as constituting good order, happiness, and prosperity. This force was seen as co-eternal and equal in power to that which made for good; men could only console themselves that ultimately the Good would prove stronger than the Evil. Moreover, we should also note that there was a considerable degree of philosophical reflection in ancient Iranian thought. Professor R. C. Zaehner, who has written a monumental study of the mysterious god Zurvan,[15] whom some scholars regard as the original high-god of Iran,[16] has shown that Time was conceived in a two-fold aspect, namely, as 'infinite Time' (*Zurvan akarana*) and 'Time of Long Dominion' (*Zurvan daregho-chvadhata*).[17] This latter form of Time was regarded as the deity which controlled the life of man in this present world. Thus one Pahlavi text reads: 'For Zurvan there is no remedy. From death there is no escape,' while in another the god of

[12]Cf. Geo. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube in Alten Iran* (Lund, 1938). pp. 94-145.

[13]*Yasna*, 45, 2-7. Cf. J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism* (London, 1913), pp. 370-1. J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastre* (Paris, 1946), pp. 227-8.

[14]Zarathustra's concept of a Final Judgment logically implies the overthrow of Evil. Cf. N. Söderblom, *La Vie future d'apres le Mazdéisme* (Paris, 1901), pp. 246 sq.; R. C. Zaehner, *The Teaching of the Magi* (London, 1956), pp. 140 sq.

[15]*Zurvan: a Zoroatrian Dilemma* (Oxford, 1955).

[16]Cf. Widengren, *op. cit.*, pp. 266–310; Zaehner, *Zurvan*, pp. 20, 88, 208, 231-2, 382.

[17]Zaehner, *op. cit.*, p. 57; H. Sasse in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, I, p. 193.

death appears simply as Time (*zaman*): 'As to him whose eye Time has sewn up, his back is seized upon and will never rise again; pain comes upon his heart so that it beats no more; his hand is broken so that it grows no more, and his foot is broken so that it walks no more. The stars come upon him, and he goes not out another time: fate came upon him, and he cannot drive it off.'[18] In the comparative study of religion this deification of Time as the power which brings decay and death to mankind is of immense significance; for it surely witnesses to the perception in ancient Persia of the destructive power of Time as an essential factor in the constitution of the universe, and one which cannot be explained away on some mythical assumption that its existence is accidental, being consequent on some primaeval sin.

This Persian deification of Time is not unique; a parallel conception occurs in Indian thought. The most striking instance, as well as the most significant, is found in the famous *Bhagavadgita*, or the 'Song of the Lord', which has been called 'the New Testament of India', because for generations of Hindus it has constituted the source of their ethics, of their spiritual consolation, and of their beliefs about God and human destiny. The *Gita*, as it is known for short, is also the supreme expression of the *bhakti* religion of India. This fact is important, because *bhakti* means 'devotion', and in this context it connotes an intense personal devotion to God, who is known here under the name of Vishnu and in his incarnated form of Krishna. The *Gita* takes the form of a dialogue between Krishna and the prince Arjuna, and it reaches its climax when the incarnated god reveals his true nature. He shows himself as the 'Lord of all, all forms possessing'.[19] Many of these forms are horrific. Then the Lord declares, 'I am death that seizes all, the origin of all that shall be. . . Know I am Time that makes the worlds to perish, when ripe, and come to bring on them destruction.'[20] Yet, after this appalling revelation, the affrighted Arjuna is reassured:

> 'Tremble thou not, be not thyself bewildered
> At thus this awful form of mine beholding;
> Cast away fear, and with thy heart rejoicing
> Once more behold that form beheld aforetime.'[21]

And so we all see that in India too men have been led to conceive of the power which rules the universe as ambivalent, as containing within itself both the principles of creation and destruction, of life and death. They are counselled in the words of the *Gita* to trust this power and to co-operate with it: 'Who does my action,' says the Lord to Arjuna, 'who

[18]Zaehner, *op. cit.*, pp. 240, see also pp. 397-8 (Z. 25); pp. 240-1, see also pp. 398-9. On Zurvan as the God of death see *op. cit.*, pp. 239–242.

[19]X–XI, trans. E. J. Thomas, *The Song of the Lord* (London, 1931), pp. 76 sq.

[20]X, 34; XI, 33; trans. Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-86.

[21]XI, 49, trans. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

makes me his aim, who is devoted to me, free from attachment, without hatred to any being, he comes to me, O son of Pandu.'[22] In other words, men are counselled to recognize that God must be both the Creator and the Destroyer, and, because he is the source of all being, they must accept and serve him as such.

When we turn to enquire of what the other great religion of the East, Buddhism, teaches in this respect, we find what at first sight appears to be a very different situation, but which on analysis proves to embody a very similar conclusion about reality. Buddhism does not include belief in a divine creator of the universe; it is primarily concerned with man and his destiny. Its estimate of the human situation is essentially realistic; no mythology being involved to account for it. It concentrates attention on the wretchedness of life, on its pain and squalor; it analyses the cause of all this suffering, and it prescribes the way of salvation from it. It is a fundamental premiss of this Buddhist philosophy that all life, as we know it, is naturally atended by pain—birth is painful, disease is painful, death is painful. In other words, suffering is part of the inherent pattern of existence; it is not due to something that has gone wrong with the pattern, nor can any way be found of changing the pattern; man can only endeavour to escape from it.[23]

When we look further east to that great hive of humanity which is China, we find what is essentially the same estimate of reality, after due allowance is made for understandable differences in the expression of the traditional forms of culture. The native Chinese conception of deity was ever curiously impersonal. Heaven really meant only the cosmic process on which man depended and of which he was a part, but with which he could never conceive of himself as having a truly personal relationship[24] One of the most characteristic terms in the Chinese language is *Tao*, and it has a great significance in this context. This term is so subtle and comprehensive in its meaning that it is difficult to find one adequate alternative for it in English. Perhaps we may best apprehend something of its meaning in the description of it given by the great Chinese scholar, Dr. Fung Yu-lan. He writes:[25] 'The word *tao*, one of the most important terms in Chinese philosophy, has a primary meaning of "road" or "way". Beginning with this primary meaning, it assumed already in ancient times a metaphorical significance, as the "Way of man", that is, human morality, conduct or truth. During this time, its meaning was always

[22]XI, 55, trans. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[23]Cf. *Samyutta* ii, 10, trans. E. J. Thomas, *Early Buddhist Scriptures* (London, 1935), pp. 119–121. Cf. E. Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures* (Pelican Books, 1959), pp. 186-7.

[24]Cf. M. Granet, *La Pensée chinoise* (Paris, 1950), pp. 586 sq.

[25]*A History of Chinese Philosophy* (London, 1937), vol. i, p. 177.

restricted to human affairs, whereas when we come to the *Lao-tzu*,[26] we find the word *tao* being given a metaphysical meaning. That is to say, the assumption is made that for the universe to have come into being, there must exist an all-embracing first principle, which is called *Tao*.' With this conception of reality as *Tao* went the idea of *Yin* and *Yang* as the alternating rhythm of the manifestation of the *Tao*. *Yin* and *Yang* represented two opposing and yet mutually completing entities, the former denoting the female and its kindred attributes of darkness, softness and inactivity, and the latter the male, which was characterized by light, hardness and activity.[27] The significance of all this for us here is that we see that in China also men, from their experience of life, were led to conceive of the universe as the expression of one supreme creative and sustaining impersonal principle, which embodied two alternating forces which accounted for the growth and decay manifest in all phenomena.

## III

We see, then, when we endeavour to look objectively at the various conclusions which mankind has reached about the nature of the universe, that these conclusions resolve themselves into two main groups. The group, which is constituted by the religions which have derived from the ancient Hebrews, namely, Christianity, Judaism and Islam, is distinguished by a view of God which identifies him essentially with a creative, life-giving and sustaining principle, benevolent to man. This principle is exalted as supreme, eternal, and personal in the constitution of its being. Such definition leaves unaccounted for the reality, and the apparent necessity, of a principle of decay and death, operative in the universe and as such inimical to man's instinct for self-preservation and his natural aspiration for the assurance of personal well-being. Regarded phenomenologically, this estimate represents what man would naturally desire; in other words, it connotes his ideals for the constitution of reality rather than his experience of it. Consequently, in this group of religions, death is not accepted as an event, natural and necessary. Instead an attempt is made, pre-eminently in Christianity, to explain death as a consequence of human sin, which will ultimately be reversed by divine action. This ignoring of the fact that the passage of time must inevitably bring decay and death to all living things means that such a religion, for all its sincerity and idealism, is basically unrealistic, and it is not surprising, therefore, that Christian soteriology is seriously involved in finding some convincing interpretation of the doctrine of Original Sin.

[26] *Circa* 6th cent. B.C. J. J. L. Duyvendak would date the *Tao-Te-Ching*, which is the fundamental document of Taoism, for about 300 B.C.

[27] Cf. Granet, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-9, 126, 128 sq.; Fung Yu-lan, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 32; J. Needham, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge, 1956), vol. ii, pp. 273-8.

The other group of religions, as we have seen, is realistic to the extent to which those religions accept decay and death as natural events in the life of all living things. That, in consequence, they ascribe to God, as the ground of all existence, the dual character of Creator and Destroyer is consistent with this realism, and is not the product of superstition and ignorance. The witness of this ascription by so many great and ancient religious traditions is of immense significance, because it represents what a large part of the human race down the centuries has come to believe about the nature of the power that has produced, sustains and governs the universe. It is, accordingly, the duty of Christian thinkers to ponder the significance of this fact, and then to ask whether the traditional Christian conception of God adequately accounts for the whole of human experience. This is not to say that the Christian estimate is wrong or seriously defective when compared with that of these other religions. It may rather mean that those who have been responsible for moulding the Christian doctrine of God have been so inspired to exalt the providence of God as only benevolent to the short-termed interests of men, that they have failed to see that his providence, in the totality of its manifestations, must involve the destruction of certain patterns of being in order to create others. Perhaps the time has come for Christian theology to move towards a greater synthesis of mankind's religious experience, and to appreciate a truth which finds expression in what is surely an inspired mistranslation of a verse from the *Book of Job*: 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'[28]

[28] *Job* xiii, 15, in the Authorized Version. See alternative renderings in the Revised Version.

# REVIEWS

## CONFUSION WORSE CONFOUNDED

The dust cover of *Anglican Attitudes*[1] is decorated with a caricature of Bishop Colenso, and the book itself is little more than a caricature of the attitude of the Church of England towards some of the great controversial issues of the Victorian era. What churchman, for example—however broad or hazy—would ever have said that we Anglicans broke away from the historic faith of Christendom in the sixteenth century? But that is what, according to Mr. Cockshut's interpretation, the Broad Church Party said in effect at the time of the Gorham Judgement (p. 47). In all he selects four major issues: the rise of Victorian agnosticism, the Gorham case, *Essays and Reviews,* and the Colenso controversy. These he sets against the wider issue of relations between Church and State in England as a result of them.

The ingredients are here for an interesting book on a very important topic, but our hopes are quickly dashed by Mr. Cockshut's treatment of them. Indeed the pages of *Anglican Attitudes* are simply littered with mistakes of fact and highly questionable judgements. Thus it is taken for granted throughout the book that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was merely an instrument of State interference in its ecclesiastical pronouncements. The possibility does not seem to have occurred to its author that, far from that being the case, it may well have been a providential means of saving the traditional comprehensiveness of the Church of England at an exceptionally difficult period. Opinions may differ as to the fitness of the Privy Council for its work as the Church's highest legal tribunal, and it is arguable that it may have been perverse in certain of its judgements; but it is quite unfair to suggest that ever during this period it was deliberately negative or reckless. Each party in the Church benefited to some extent in turn from its rulings, and it is clear that these were made with a full sense of the heavy responsibility laid upon the makers of them. Unfortunately Mr. Cockshut seems to have been led into error by an imperfect knowledge of his subject. 'It may be', he says, writing of the *Essays and Reviews* case, decided in 1864, 'that by now the Privy Council would not have condemned any Latitudinarian for heresy' (p. 79); but in fact three years before this, in 1861, a certain Mr. Heath, vicar of Brading, in the Isle of Wight, had been deprived of his living by the Judicial Committee for this very cause, and the famous Voysey case of 1869 was to make it perfectly plain that there were indeed limits (however wide they might be) beyond which doctrinal latitude could not be permitted to go.

Similarly, the impression we get of *Essays and Reviews* is that it was a muddle headed attempt to sabotage the Church of England from within. Despite the amount of space he gives to the subject of agnosticism, Mr. Cockshut fails to realize how hard it was becoming by 1860 for any intelligent person to remain an orthodox Christian, and how the attitude of many Church leaders was making it harder still. Thus it is at least arguable that *Essays and Reviews* was no act of sabotage but a brave attempt to show that the Church of England—despite all appearances to the contrary—was not committed to a gross fundamentalism. But in any case the ultimate aquittal of the Essayists did not mean that the Privy Council had set its *imprimatur* of orthodoxy upon their work, but merely that the particular extracts on which the accusations of heresy were based were not found to be at variance with the Anglican formularies. Both the Privy Council and the Court of Arches were careful to avoid any expression of opinion about the book as a whole.

But it is when he reaches the Colenso dispute that Mr. Cockshut really comes to grief. His thesis is that then at last the turning point was reached and the Bishops of the Church of England rose in defiance of the Privy Council and the authority of the State behind it.

[1] *Anglican Attitudes,* by A. O. J. Cockshut; Collins, 1959; 128 pp., 16/-.

'The bishops, rightly or wrongly, saw in the decision of the courts about Colenso an attempt to change the Church's faith. Against this the bishops set up their own conception of spiritual liberty, designed as it were to take the place of their fast-disappearing material advantages' (p. 121).

This extraordinary statement must surely cause the informed reader to rub his eyes. If any such attempt to change the Church's faith had been made, it had been made by the self appointed court of Colenso's adversary, Robert Gray, at Cape Town. The Privy Council's judgement against Colenso's deposition by it was at pains to avoid any consideration of the merits of the case, and it gave no sanction whatever to the views Colenso had expressed. It simply found that the proceedings which Gray had taken against him were legally null and void. Most of the English bishops were convinced that Colenso was a heretic, it is true, and refused to hold communion with him; but in any case Gray had provided them with a convenient means of avoiding any chance of collision with the law by stating that his sentence upon Colenso was a 'spiritual' one. Thus, in being able to say that Colenso was spiritually though not legally deposed, the bishops found an admirable subterfuge which many of them seized upon with avidity. But as to any real defiance by them, it exists only in Mr. Cockshut's imagination. To say (p. 88) that Mcrorie, Gray's rival bishop in Natal, 'was consecrated by Gray on the unanimous authority of the bench of bishops in England' is stark palpable nonsense. Admittedly many brave things had been said, but when it came to the push Gray was left altogether alone. So far from their attitude hardening in favour of Gray until it became 'determined defiance of the State' (p. 107), it is a moot point whether by the end of the Lambeth Conference in 1868 most bishops did not feel that Gray was even a bigger nuisance than Colenso. At any rate the 'determined defiance' came only from Gray—and even he was still hopeful, when Mcrorie's consecration took place, that a mandate from the Crown authorizing it would arrive. Tait, who by that time had succeeded to the Primacy, had all along done his utmost to prevent the consecration, while Thompson, Archbishop of York, when requested by Gray to inform his province of its accomplishment, returned the letter to its sender with the single word 'refused' scrawled across it. So much for the 'unanimous authority' which the Church of England provided.

It would be tedious to give a detailed list of the further inaccuracies with which *Anglican Attitudes* abounds. For example, Jowett was not yet—for another ten years—Master of Balliol when *Essays and Reviews* appeared; and neither he nor Frederick Temple nor Mark Pattison can properly be described as 'famous men' by 1860 (p. 67). Again it is odd to read that the Essayists 'were driven to take a terribly severe view' of all whose lives did not conform to the Christian ethical system when one of them, H. B. Wilson, was charged with heresy for the very reason that he hoped that all men might ultimately be saved! (p. 65). The clergyman mentioned on p. 104, the Rev. William Long, was not deprived of his preferment by Gray for very adequate moral reasons, but sentenced to three months suspension of office for failing to attend a synod. Colenso's following in Natal was not only a personal one (p. 117) or even mainly so; nor did his supporters have to wait after his death until the 1950's for a bishop to come and rule over them (p. 118)—Bishop Hamilton Baynes was appointed in 1893 to preside over both Churches in Natal, though the attempt to do so quickly proved unsuccessful.

All in all it is a pity that Mr. Cockshut did not master his subject more thoroughly and more carefully; his book would have been much more worth while had he done so. The controversies he has dealt with are in any case a confused and complex subject, but *Anglican Attitudes* only makes confusion worse confounded.

D. L. Scott

## T. W. MANSON MEMORIAL LECTURE

The death of Professor T. W. Manson in May, 1958, ended a life of devoted service to the cause of Christian learning and education. His work was of the highest quality and the range of his activity so extensive, that many persons and many institutions, both in his own country and in other lands, have been greatly benefited by what he did and what he was. The numerous tributes which were paid to his memory, when he died, were eloquent of the widespread sense of gratitude which was felt for his work and the deep respect in which he was held. Since that time the feeling has grown among his friends and associates that some suitable memorial to his life and work should be established, and that many people would be glad to contribute to the cost of its foundation. It has, accordingly, been decided to undertake to raise the sum of at least £1,000 to endow a public lecture in the field of New Testament studies, to be given annually in the Victoria University of Manchester. It is believed that such a lecture, given each year by some eminent New Testament scholar, in the subject which Dr. Manson professed with such distinction, and in the University which he served with so much devotion, would most fittingly preserve his memory, and also be a tribute which he himself would especially have appreciated. The foundation would be known as the T. W. Manson Memorial Lecture.

Contributions should be addressed to Professor H. H. Rowley, Victoria University of Manchester, Manchester 13, by whom they will be acknowledged. Cheques should be made payable to T. W. Manson Memorial Fund.

(Signed) M. Black (Principal of the College of St. Mary and Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism in the University of St. Andrews.

S. G. F. Brandon (Dean of the Faculty of Theology in the University of Manchester).

W. Mansfield Cooper (Vice-Chancellor of Manchester University).

C. H. Dodd (General Director of the New Translation of the Bible).

J. H. Price (President of the Manchester and District Free Church Federal Council).

H. H. Rowley (Professor of Hebrew Languages and Literature in the University of Manchester).

Stopford of Fallowfield.

William Manchester (Bishop of Manchester).

R. D. Whitehorn (Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge).

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